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President: Mr. Rosenthal (Vice-President) ..... (Guatemala)

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(a) Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (A/CONF.198/11)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies (A/57/16; E/2002/55)

(b) Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 (A/57/6 (prog. 6-22 and 26) and 16)

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(e) Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2002/66)

(f) Tobacco or health (E/2002/44)

1. **Ms. King** (Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women), speaking on sub-item (e), said that the incorporation of gender perspectives into the different areas of United Nations work would further the Millennium development goals and the objectives of all the major United Nations conferences. Moreover, the Council's decision to include an agenda item on gender mainstreaming would allow it to monitor the progress made both in its own work and throughout the United Nations system.

2. The report of the Secretary-General in document E/2002/66 assessed the relevant work of the Council and its functional commissions and also of the catalytic Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. Gender mainstreaming in the work of the governing bodies of the funds and programmes and the specialized agencies should also be monitored, but at the moment there was no mechanism for a systematic review of their decisions. A panel on gender mainstreaming in the Council's functional commissions had met the previous month to assist the Council and had focused on good practices, gaps, challenges, and future opportunities for reflecting gender perspectives in the areas of social development, forestry, crime prevention and criminal justice. A number of suggestions had been made: regular reports on gender mainstreaming by the functional commissions for review by the Council; consideration of the question at joint bureau meetings, with one member designated as a possible focal point; regular briefings by the Commission on the Status of Women or the Secretariat; and constant staff development.

3. **Mr. Mazet** (Chairman of the Committee for Programme and Coordination), speaking on sub-item (a) and introducing the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) (A/57/16), said that the Committee had considered the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/57/85) at its forty-second session, had reviewed the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 and was recommending for approval those revisions with some modifications, as indicated in chapter III.B of its report.

4. He drew attention to the recommendations in chapter III.B on those programmes of the medium-term plan that related to the Council's work: namely, the recommendations in paragraphs 107 and 108 on programme 7, Economic and social affairs, in paragraph 117 on programme 8, Africa: New Agenda for Development, and in paragraph 167 on programme 14, Economic and social development in Africa. In connection with programmes 9 to 13 and 15 to 19, the Committee was recommending approval of the proposed revisions, including those relating to human rights, with some modifications. It had also recommended the inclusion, with some modifications, of a proposed new programme 26, Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

5. He drew attention to the recommendation in chapter III.C of the CPC report that the Council should review relevant parts of the in-depth evaluation of the subprogrammes on General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and Council support and coordination (para. 271).

6. Chapter IV.A dealt with the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2001 (E/2002/55); and a number of the CPC conclusions and recommendations relating to CEB were also germane to the work of the Council (paras. 316, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322 and 323). In chapter IV.B, the Committee had

emphasized that the development needs of Africa should remain a high priority (para. 334) and it had recommended that the United Nations system should develop a strategic operational framework to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (para. 337).

7. In chapter VI, on working methods, the Committee had reiterated its recommendation that the relevant intergovernmental bodies, as well as the Economic and Social Council and the Main Committees of the General Assembly, should review the programmes of the medium-term plan and its revisions that were relevant to their work (para. 363).

8. He trusted that the Council would take appropriate action on those recommendations.

9. **Mr. Kageyama** (Chief, Systems Management Section, Information Technology Services Division), speaking on sub-item (c), and introducing the report in document E/2002/78, said that the technical subgroup of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics, working in close consultation with the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force, had conducted a number of activities over the past year. It had held a conference on e-commerce, made a series of presentations on e-governments and bridgin the digital divide; and deployed anti-virus software to the permanent missions of Member States. In collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), it had provided information technology training for diplomats, although owing to unprecedented budget cuts, the Division had in the course of the year had to make some temporary reductions in its services to permanent missions.

10. In response to issues raised by the Ad Hoc Working Group, the Division had completed the re-engineering of the Optical Disk System into the Official Document System (ODS), now a purely Internet web-based system allowing access from anywhere in the world. Among the new possibilities offered by the new system were a multilingual search function, and direct access to documents in all languages from the United Nations web site.

11. The Division continued to provide the services for permanent missions outlined in paragraph 23. With technical support, the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services was trying to make the best use of information technology in the translation process by introducing a full-text and electronically searchable document repository, multilingual terminology databases, electronic reference support systems, voice-recognition software and document scanning.

12. **Dr. da Costa e Silva** (World Health Organization (WHO)), speaking on sub-item (f) and introducing the report in document E/2002/44, said that along with HIV/AIDS, the use of tobacco was the fastest growing, and single most preventable, cause of death in the world. The estimated number of deaths, 4.2 million in 2002, was expected to rise to 8.4 million in 2020, 70 per cent of them in the developing countries. The total number of female smokers was expected to increase from approximately 260 million in 2000 to approximately 325 million in 2020, with enormous consequences for health, income and family unless the epidemic was curtailed.

13. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control (E/2002/44) gave the economic, social and public-health background of tobacco control. Despite evidence of the adverse impact of tobacco consumption, many Governments had, out of economic considerations, avoided taking effective steps, such as imposing higher taxes, banning advertising, or restricting smoking in public places. Yet, as a recent World Bank study had demonstrated, the economic fears were largely unfounded: higher tobacco taxes would not reduce tax revenues, and the reduction of per-capita tobacco consumption would result not in the loss of tobacco-related jobs but rather in investment in services in less harmful fields.

14. WHO had forecast future trends, taking into account projected population increases and assuming global implementation of effective tobacco-control policies: even if tobacco use decreased at an annual 1-per-cent rate for the next 20 and 50 years — which would represent a significant success — the total number of smokers predicted would still be higher than in the year 2000.

15. The issue of cigarette smuggling was high on the agenda of Governments and international organizations because of its impact on economies in the form of lost tax revenues and on public health as a result of increased consumption owing to lower prices. The illicit cigarette trade now stood at an estimated 6 to 8.5 per cent of global cigarette consumption.

16. The Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force had met twice, once in a video-conference session in December 2000 with the participation of eight United Nations organizations, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO); and again in December 2001, with the participation of seven United Nations organizations, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (WCO). Considerable inter-agency work had been done on the economic, social and health issues involved in tobacco control.

17. The globalization of the tobacco epidemic meant that even countries with the most comprehensive tobacco-control programmes risked seeing their successes undone by transnational factors such as advertising and illicit trade. It had, however, given impetus to a multilateral commitment to protect present and future generations: WHO member States had negotiated the first treaty in WHO history, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which was expected to be adopted in 2003.

18. The main subjects of future collaboration that had emerged from the work of the Task Force were employment issues, children and youth, smoke-free policies in the United Nations system, and smuggling. Numerous ways had been identified in which Task Force members could facilitate the technical work relating to the Framework Convention, and that work had already begun.

19. **Mr. Christensen** (Observer for Denmark) speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey with regard to sub-item (a), called for increased dialogue between the Council and CEB and expressed appreciation for the support provided to the Council's functional commissions. The Union welcomed the increased United Nations coordination and would be interested to hear how the executive heads viewed the first year of working within the new format as well as their comments on the work of the High-level Committees on Programmes and Management.

20. The Union would also like to learn the executive heads' views on how to support country-level implementation of the Millennium development goals and to coordinate implementation of the HIV/AIDS declaration of commitments. It was interested in coordination regarding oceans and seas and, in view of the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, would welcome comments by the executive heads on supporting preparations for the Summit and the CEB role in supporting the follow-up to the Summit. It was also pleased that the security of humanitarian staff remained a priority and would once again be submitting a draft resolution on that issue to the General Assembly.

21. **Mr. Hahn** (Observer for Denmark) speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and, in addition, Iceland and Liechtenstein with regard to sub-item (e), said that, although progress had been made with respect to gender mainstreaming, gender issues were not always routinely taken into account when analysing issues and formulating policy. Opportunities to narrow gender gaps must continue to be identified and a comprehensive assessment must be made at a future coordination segment before 2005.

22. The European Union appreciated the progress made by the Council's subsidiary bodies in mainstreaming a gender perspective into their work. The Commission on the Status of Women of course played a catalytic role, while the Commission for Social Development had identified gender equality as crucial for social and people-centred sustainable development, a stance confirmed in the Monterrey Consensus. Other subsidiary bodies continued to use and call for sex-disaggregated data and to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators for assessing progress in the empowerment of women.

23. The European Union noted with appreciation the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and its efforts to ensure that the CEB addressed gender perspectives systematically. In that context, it welcomed the commitment of the Security Council to considering humanitarian issues and the effect of conflict on women and children, as stated in its resolution 1325 (2000). It also welcomed efforts by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to mainstream a gender perspective into its work. The Union had made gender mainstreaming a guiding principle of its intergovernmental processes, bilateral programmes and policies.

24. **Mr. Iwai** (Japan) welcomed the establishment of the new regular sub-item (e) on gender mainstreaming obstacles and said it was encouraging that women were increasingly perceived not only as having special needs but also as active contributors in areas such as forest management, sustainable social development and crime prevention. Unfortunately, the lack of gender-disaggregated data made effective analysis difficult, and he called for increased efforts to develop such data.

25. Coordination and collective efforts by United Nations bodies were essential for successful promotion of gender mainstreaming, and he commended the initiative taken by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues in holding the first session of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality. Member States and the United Nations system as a whole should share experience and information about best practices in the area of gender mainstreaming.

26. In Japan, the Council for Gender Equality and the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office had taken the lead in implementing the Basic Plan for Gender Equality, which took into account the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Its goal was gender mainstreaming in Japanese society, and it contained concrete measures to that end. Efforts had been undertaken to expand women's participation in decision-making, review the social system and promote a gender equality perspective, for example by supporting both women's and men's efforts to balance work, family and community and by working to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

27. **Ms. Mudie** (Australia), speaking also on behalf of Canada and New Zealand, said that the new sub-item on gender mainstreaming provided an opportunity for the Council to evaluate lessons learned and identify and remedy obstacles to effective gender mainstreaming. The Beijing Platform for Action had established a comprehensive set of actions. The five-year review in 2000 had acknowledged gender mainstreaming as a globally accepted strategy and emphasized the need for political will and commitment at all levels to make mainstreaming a reality. Before 2005, the Council should devote a coordination segment to the review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of its agreed conclusions of 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming.

28. The report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/66) was encouraging and provided examples of how the functional commissions had focused on women-specific issues and mainstreamed a gender perspective. A major challenge for the Council would be to ensure that United Nations institutions and programmes which did not have a tradition of addressing women-specific situations or gender issues developed a clear understanding of how gender mainstreaming could enhance their work. She therefore welcomed the recognition by the multi-stakeholder dialogue of the United Nations Forum on Forests that women must be included in planning forestry policies and that outcomes should reflect the perspectives and experiences of women. All functional commissions, programmes and agencies should likewise implement gender mainstreaming in its broadest application.

29. In order to overcome remaining obstacles and challenges, key issues must be made gender-neutral and better understanding of the positive effects of gender mainstreaming must be promoted. More gender-specific information and data must be made available and areas which had the most potential for leverage from a gender perspective must be identified. Emphasis should be placed on measuring outcomes and developing results-oriented strategies, explicit decisions on gender mainstreaming should be adopted by subsidiary bodies and greater accountability should be required.

30. **Mr. Choulkov** (Russian Federation) expressed support for the work of CEB and said that the establishment within the Board's framework of two high level committees helped resolve the issue of inter-agency representation. Regrettably, however, the reform process was being hindered by the recent slackening of inter-agency cooperation on financial and budgetary issues. Such cooperation should be prioritized in the Board's work, given its importance in the transition to strategic budgeting.

31. The forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society should not focus exclusively on technical aspects of bridging the digital divide. It should also address the social, economic, political and cultural ramifications of the information society, in particular the contribution of ICT to sustainable development. The Summit should also draw lessons from past experience and devise bold, yet realistic new initiatives. The preparatory process should be provided with adequate funding to ensure its success and the

donor community and private sector should be mobilized accordingly.

32. The United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force had made a positive contribution to the development of a common approach to the use of ICT for development purposes. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics was, for its part, performing a useful role, given the importance of upgrading ICT throughout the United Nations system.

33. **Mr. Alexandre** (Observer for Haiti) said that, although economic recovery and reconstruction in Haiti were primarily the responsibility of the Government and the people of Haiti, a long-term programme of support for sustainable development would require a significant level of assistance, both material and financial, on the part of the international community, with the practical modalities for that support to be defined in consultation between international partners and the Government.

34. His Government was working to improve the grave economic situation in the country, while at the same time ensuring respect for democracy and taking full advantage of international support. Despite progress made, however, certain international donors had suspended vital assistance to his Government and had made the restoration of that assistance conditional on a solution to the political crisis.

35. He reaffirmed his Government's commitment to resolving the political crisis. It had undertaken negotiations and responded to concerns expressed by the Organization of American States (OAS). His Government was also meeting its commitments to international partners. It had cooperated with the OAS and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights mission for strengthening democracy in Haiti and President Aristide himself had intervened in the political negotiations. Unfortunately, exaggerated demands from some elements of the opposition were creating difficulties and the Government had no right to impose a solution.

36. Attempts to make a renewal of assistance conditional on the signing of an agreement which would reflect the will of only one of the parties could but strengthen the opposition's refusal to negotiate. The result would be continued poverty and suffering. Haitians had the right to expect better, given the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration.

37. The Secretary-General had stated that it seemed unfair to reduce support for a country whose needs were so great. The long-term programme of support should not be held hostage. The report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/56) cited the conclusion of the World Bank to the effect that Haiti was an extreme case of a country caught in a vicious circle of unemployment, inequality, poor education, lawlessness and violence (para. 11). International financial assistance was the key to breaking that vicious circle, which affected political stability and socio-economic development.

38. **Mr. Ouattara** (Burkina Faso) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2002/56), where the prevailing political and institutional situation had inevitable socio-economic effects. The United Nations system and all development partners must continue to provide assistance to the millions of Haitians living in poverty. Haiti, which was both a least developed country and a small island developing State, and therefore doubly vulnerable, merited special support for poverty eradication and sustainable development. His delegation urged the Council to request regular progress reports on the subject of the long-term programme of support under review.

39. **Ms. Taracena-Secatra** (Guatemala), speaking on sub-item (e), welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (E/2002/66) and the creation of a task force to look into ways for the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality to collaborate with the new CEB structure.

40. At the domestic level, her Government and its Presidential Secretariat for Women had developed a policy for the Promotion and Advancement of Guatemalan Women and a plan to give women equitable opportunities in nine principal areas. Unfortunately, the lack of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific information made it difficult to promote a gender perspective.

41. She supported the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the Council's functional commissions and subsidiary bodies. Her delegation believed that gender mainstreaming within the United Nations was essential in order to complement the work of Governments at the national level. Efforts to make gender mainstreaming universal would contribute to the eradication of poverty and to realization of the Millennium development goals.

42. **Mr. Blanco Dominguez** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that free access to ICT was a matter of great importance to his Government. His delegation welcomed United Nations efforts to transfer knowledge and technology to developing countries in order to assist them in carrying out their national development plans and strategies. It supported the strengthening of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, and looked forward to active participation in the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society.

43. His delegation also supported the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 56/206 to transform the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) into the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

44. Providing effective follow-up to the major conferences and summits was one of the greatest challenges facing the Council, and its work to ensure the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the outcome of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development would give it an opportunity to fulfil the role accorded to it by the Charter. His delegation looked forward to receiving progress reports on those follow-up activities. It supported the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all policies and programmes, and it welcomed the review of the role of non-governmental organizations in gender mainstreaming recently conducted by the Commission on Social Development. The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests had also included women in all aspects of planning and decision-making, which was a welcome development.

45. Finally, his delegation expressed its support to the Haitian people and stressed the need to assist them at all levels in mobilizing to achieve the Millennium development goals.

46. **Mr. Kolby** (Observer for Norway) said that the resolution adopted by the Council at its 2001 substantive session had been an important step towards strengthening the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all policies and programmes. Real change did not happen, however, without real commitment, hard work and a strategic approach. His delegation found the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report (E/2002/66) useful, particularly the recommendation that the Council, its subsidiary bodies and the functional commissions should address gender perspectives in relation to thematic issues more systematically. It also agreed on the need to improve the situation regarding gender-specific information and data disaggregated by sex. In future reports, his delegation would encourage more emphasis on analysis and lessons learned.

47. **Mr. Valera** (Mexico), commenting on sub-items (d) and (e), said that his delegation welcomed the report on the long-term programme of support for Haiti. The stabilization of the situation in Haiti, with the support of OAS, would facilitate the resumption of international assistance. His delegation was also pleased that the item would remain on the Council's agenda for subsequent sessions. The long-term programme should aim at building national capacity in such key sectors as health care, education, trade and investment, as well as institution-building, human rights, and combating HIV/AIDS and poverty.

48. Turning to the mainstreaming of a gender perspective, he said that Mexico attached great importance to that theme, and, as an active participant in the Commission on the Status of Women, it had supported major initiatives in that area. His Government had established an independent National Institute for Women and an equal opportunity programme. The Council's consideration of the item would provide an opportunity to evaluate progress in implementation of the outcome of the Beijing Conference.

49. **Mr. Muchetwa** (Zimbabwe), referring to sub-item (f), said that tobacco remained the largest earner of foreign currency for Zimbabwe, contributing more than $663 million in export earnings in 2001. The tobacco industry accounted for 30 to 33 per cent of the gross domestic product, and was the nation's largest employer. The draft Framework Convention on Tobacco Control thus presented a serious economic and social threat to the country's future.

50. Regrettably, the methodology used by FAO in country case studies lacked any adjustment mechanisms. Moreover, it would be logical to analyse the results of those case studies before considering a legally binding convention, and it was important to uphold the principle of consensus. Careful attention should be given to the possible impact of tobacco control in the long term, the feasibility of alternative crops and appropriate guarantees for the agrarian

economies that would be affected, including compensation for losses incurred.

51. Although transparency and the involvement of all stakeholders had been called for, there had not been full consultations in the process of formulating the Framework. Tobacco-related diseases were not alone in killing millions of people: such epidemics as HIV/AIDS and malaria were equally or more devastating. The employment aspect of the tobacco industry was grossly understated in the report.

52. None of the studies carried out on crop diversification in Zimbabwe and Malawi could come up with a replacement for tobacco. Emphasis should be placed on assisting those countries to move away from tobacco production and engage in other remunerative activities. The Secretary-General's report admitted that the requirements for adjustment assistance had not been addressed to date. His delegation strongly recommended that the final version of the Framework Convention should embrace the concerns and problems of Zimbabwe and other countries in a similar situation.

53. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile) said that the question of Haiti had been on the agenda of the Security Council since the early 1990s, and the Secretary-General had established a Group of Friends of Haiti (Argentina, Canada, France, the United States of America and Venezuela) to assist in seeking solutions to its complex political, social and economic problems. On becoming a member of the Security Council in 1996, Chile had immediately joined in supporting those efforts. For the same reasons, Chile attached great importance to the Secretary-General's report on the long-term programme of support for Haiti and would participate actively in all efforts, within both the United Nations system and OAS, to consolidate democratic institutions and establish a climate of security and stability, thereby facilitating its economic and social development. His delegation called on the international community to support those efforts through cooperation and financial assistance. His delegation intended to join the sponsors of the draft resolution in support of the programme.

54. **Mr. Carter** (United States of America) said that mitigation of humanitarian distress in Haiti was a priority for his Government, which also supported efforts by OAS and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to address human rights issues. His delegation would join the sponsors of the related draft resolution and requested that the Council should include the item in its agenda for the 2003 substantive session.

55. **Mr. Aho-Glélé** (Benin), speaking as coordinator of the Group of the Least Developed Countries with reference to the long-term programme for Haiti, said that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries called for people-centred programmes and development. The fundamental principles of United Nations operational activities — universality and neutrality — must be upheld in implementing the programme. No reference to criteria or concepts outside the programme of support should be made in the draft resolution, and no political conditions imposed on the assistance to be provided. Finally, he paid tribute to the work of the Chairman of CPC in relation to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

56. **Mr. Reyes Rodriguez** (Cuba) said that his delegation considered the mainstreaming of a gender perspective one of the most important aspects of the work of the Organization. Of all the major conferences of the 1990s, the Fourth World Conference on Women had done the most to raise awareness in Governments around the world. The personal efforts and commitment of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General had been key to that success.

57. With regard to the issue of tobacco and health, his country, like Zimbabwe, was a major producer of tobacco, although less dependent on it for export earnings. It hoped that an equal level of enthusiasm would be displayed in fighting abuse of alcohol, not only in the developing countries but in the major producers. His Government was working to reduce the use of tobacco, but it felt that, in drafting the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, attention should be paid to the characteristics and conditions of producer countries. Integral solutions should be sought that allowed progress both in health and in sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

58. His Government expressed its solidarity with the Haitian people in their struggle for self-determination. Unfortunately, their political, social and economic development had been interrupted by intervention from a regional Power. The Cuban people had provided unconditional support through assistance in such areas as health care and literacy. His delegation was surprised at the conditions selectively imposed on Haiti

by OAS and believed that unrelated political matters should be left out of the relevant resolution.

59. **Mr. Civili** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination), with regard to the report of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) (E/2002/55), said that he would take note of the issues raised. In response to the representative of the Russian Federation, who had expressed concern that inadequate attention was being paid to coordination in the area of finance, he said that in creating the High-level Committee on Management there had been no intention to divert attention, but rather a desire to ensure an integrated approach, in parallel to the action taken in many similar bodies. Networking was currently more active in personnel areas than in finance, however.

60. **Mr. Moir** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)), addressing sub-item (f), said that FAO had undertaken a project consisting of studies focusing on various aspects of the global tobacco economy. The results indicated that if current policies continued, global tobacco production and consumption would continue to grow, aided by expanding populations and increasing incomes. In developing countries, consumption would continue to rise. An alternative projection assumed that taxes on consumption would be increased significantly and that support for tobacco farming would be reduced. The impact of such measures would be modest, since taxation rates would remain heaviest in developed countries where consumption was already contracting. In developing countries, the fiscal burden would be smaller and demand would continue to rise.

61. The impact of tobacco control measures on tobacco-producing countries would depend on many factors, particularly on the existence of alternative economic opportunities. Farmers would be unlikely to switch to other crops unless the price of tobacco fell significantly. Gradual adjustment to a lower level of tobacco production would, however, be possible, with limited economic consequences in the long run. Assistance from the international community would make the adjustment less painful for poorer countries, especially those heavily dependent on tobacco.

62. **Ms. Hakahsta** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that policy makers should recognize that all workers had the right to a safe and healthy work environment and should treat smoking as an occupational health and safety problem. Not only did passive smoking in the workplace cause cancer and other serious illnesses, but it also increased the risk of fires and explosions and created the potential for stress and violence resulting from conflicts between smokers and non-smokers. Moreover, the synergistic effects on health of tobacco, chemicals, substances such as asbestos and radiation should not be ignored.

63. It was in the interest of all Governments to use the workplace to raise awareness of smoking and other health-related issues. It was also in the interests of employers to curb smoking on their premises, in view of absenteeism, increased health and maintenance costs, and tobacco's negative impact on insurance premiums and retirement funds.

64. Discrimination against workers on the basis of their tobacco habit must not be tolerated, whether during recruitment or at work. Equally, workers seeking to achieve a workplace free of tobacco smoke must not be stigmatized. Policies on smoking at work should be universal and unambiguous. They should apply to all types of public and private employment, including in the informal sector, and should apply to management and workers equally. Policy makers should also recognize the gender dimensions of tobacco use. The successful implementation of policy on tobacco smoke required cooperation and trust between employers and workers, as well as changes in attitudes and behaviour. Support should be given both to non-smokers — who had the right to breathe clean air — and to those wishing to quit smoking. All workers should have access to affordable health services and cessation assistance.

65. **Ms. de Beyer** (World Bank) said that the United Nations Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control, in which the World Bank participated, had continued to share expertise and information on the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use within a sound economic and social framework. The World Bank study entitled *Curbing the Epidemic: Governments and the Economics of Tobacco Control* showed that tobacco control in most countries could be implemented without a net loss of jobs, without causing a significant increase in smuggling, and without imposing an added burden on poor families.

66. A substantial and growing body of country-specific evidence from developing countries on economic and social issues related to tobacco control confirmed earlier global evidence that most countries

could actually reduce tobacco use, save lives and improve health while increasing government revenues. New jobs would be created in other sectors, compensating for the jobs lost in the tobacco sector. Smokers who quit or cut back in response to higher prices would enjoy longer, healthier lives and have more to spend on other goods and services.

67. In the longer term, special measures might be needed to help the countries, regions and communities that were particularly vulnerable to world tobacco market declines. It was important, however, to "work for the greatest good" and not to forgo the potentially huge gains in health, productivity and life expectancy that proven, cost-effective measures to reduce tobacco could deliver. Although thousands, or at most a few million, jobs might be at risk if tobacco use declined dramatically, the health, productivity and lives of at least twelve hundred million smokers were currently at risk from tobacco use. Revenues from higher tobacco taxes could also be used to compensate tobacco farmers and workers.

68. Although the global market for tobacco would remain for the foreseeable future, the international community must act to curb and gradually reverse its growth, including by changing national policies on land ownership and cultivation.

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*) (E/2002/12 and Corr.1)

(a) Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*) (E/2002/48, 53, 57 and 64)

69. **Mr. Wahba** (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that UNDP had been a main stakeholder in the preparatory process of the International Conference on Financing for Development held at Monterrey, contributing more than 130 country experiences. The agency continued to be actively concerned with follow-up, not only in the context of intergovernmental policy dialogue, but also in its operational activities for development at the country level. Convinced that a review of UNDP support to development operations would prove useful to policy analysis and follow-up, his delegation wished to propose that UNDP should participate in the Council's annual dialogue with representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. UNDP was fully supportive of a strong link between financing for development and attaining internally agreed development goals, and it was also keen to report to the Council on its activities in that regard.

70. **Ms. Sidikov** (International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity), speaking on behalf of the Interim Facilitating Group of Non-Governmental Organizations providing follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus and financing for development process, said that the International Conference on Financing for Development had promised to be a unique opportunity for Governments to make concrete commitments to tackle persistent development deficits. However, its outcome had been somewhat disappointing. More action was needed to achieve Millennium development goals, in particular that of halving the number of people living in poverty. The network thus urged Governments to increase their support for Conference follow-up.

71. The Secretary-General, for his part, should ensure effective secretariat support within the United Nations. The organizations on whose behalf she spoke also supported the creation of an "Economic and Social Security Council" that would have the same standing as the Security Council in its respective field. Indeed, strengthening the role of the Economic and Social Council was a first step in that direction. Governments should involve a broader range of ministries in the work of the Council. The Council, for its part, should hold shorter and more regular meetings to review follow-up and to ensure that it was able to respond appropriately to actual economic and social circumstances. An effective mechanism should also be established for substantive engagement on specific issues with the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO, with appropriate secretariat support and the participation of civil society. The General Assembly, for its part, should reconstitute its high-level dialogue on strengthening international cooperation so that it might serve as a focal point for policy coordination and Conference follow-up, with the involvement of relevant international institutions and non-governmental organizations.

72. It was the hope of the network that the Monterrey follow-up process would truly enhance the quality of life of many of the world's poorest people and not merely result in a set of basic principles or objectives.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

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Provisional summary record of the 31st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 19 July 2002, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Rosenthal (Vice-President) ..... (Guatemala)

Contents

Regional cooperation

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

02-48895 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Regional cooperation (E/2002/15 and Add.1-3 and Add.3/Corr.1 and 16-20)

Panel discussion on interregional cooperation for sustainable development: regional challenges ahead

1. **Ms. Schmögnerová** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)), Panellist, highlighted the major trends in the ECE region with respect to the three key dimensions of sustainable development. Regarding the economic dimension, she said that, over the past decade, Western Europe and North America had enjoyed significant growth in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. That trend had been accompanied by structural changes in the production system, with a shift from material- and energy-intensive sectors to services. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were beginning to recover from the transition recession. Yet, only a few of those countries had surpassed their 1989 output levels. All were aiming to accelerate their growth, restructure heavy industries, phase out obsolete technologies and increase energy efficiency.

2. Concerning the social dimension, she said that while poverty and unemployment affected the entire region, countries with economies in transition were the hardest hit. In some of those countries, the proportion of the total population living in poverty had increased from 2-3 per cent to 30-40 per cent. Life expectancy, particularly for men, had declined dramatically and people faced many kinds of insecurity. Conflicts in certain parts of the region had further exacerbated the situation.

3. As to the environmental dimension, in Western Europe and North America, technological innovations had helped to reduce the energy and material intensity of many consumer goods and a small but growing number of consumers were making lifestyle changes in order to lessen the environmental impact of their consumption patterns. However, the increasing volume of goods used and discarded and the structure of consumer demand in key areas, such as energy and transport, had outweighed many of those gains.

4. The countries of the ECE region faced four major challenges. First, they must address the issues of poverty, income disparities and, given their ageing populations, intergenerational solidarity, in a context of budgetary constraints and economic competition. Second, they must accelerate the move towards more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Third, steps must be taken to preserve the global commons. Fourth, governance and participatory democracy must be strengthened, with a view to increasing public participation in decision-making on all aspects of sustainable development.

5. Efforts to meet those challenges at the national level must be accompanied by regional cooperation. ECE was already playing an important role in that regard by: supporting subregional and regional processes engaged in the ECE region and relating to sustainable development; developing legally binding instruments, ranging from environmental conventions to ECE norms and standards; and assisting countries with economies in transition to move towards sustainable development. ECE was committed to further strengthening its activities in the area of sustainable development, based on the proven assets of the regional commissions.

6. **Mr. Kim** Hak-Su (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)), Panellist, said that improving the quality of life for the hundreds of millions of people living in poverty represented an enormous challenge for the Asia and the Pacific region, which, like a number of other regions, had to deal with such problems as illiteracy, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, ageing, poor access to water and sanitation, transboundary pollution, desertification, equitable use of shared natural resources and, in particular, unsustainable development. Those common concerns underscored the need for interregional cooperation and coordination. Given the scarcity of international resources, such cooperation offered an efficient way of building capacity, providing training and sharing knowledge, experience and best practices. It was imperative, in all regions, that stakeholders, particularly non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and women, should be involved in formulating and implementing policies.

7. The regional commissions were well positioned to contribute to and, indeed, had already taken steps to promote interregional cooperation. As regional coordination mechanisms, they embraced a variety of institutions, including United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, subregional organizations and regional financial and

technical assistance institutions. ESCAP, for its part, was collaborating with ECE on the rational and efficient use of energy and water resources in Central Asia and on a set of guidelines for public participation in environment-related matters, a field in which ECE had extensive experience. It was exploring similar cooperation with other regional commissions, including with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on desertification and urban governance.

8. The development and implementation of a mechanism to promote more robust interregional cooperation should be pursued further through, inter alia, joint programming and projects, as well as discussion forums, with a view to encouraging not only North-South but also South-South cooperation.

9. **Mr. Ocampo** (Executive Secretary of the, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)), Panellist, said that in the ten years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro the concept of sustainable development had become a frame of reference for the international agenda, not just in environmental matters, but also in poverty alleviation, gender equality, population and human settlements. However, the international community's initial enthusiasm for implementing the principles and goals agreed in Rio had decreased, and it was to be hoped that the World Summit on Sustainable Development would provide an opportunity to reaffirm political commitments, make the global agenda more cohesive, improve its translation into action and strengthen operational links with regional and national agencies.

10. In the Latin American and Caribbean region, much remained to be done to promote cohesive financial, commercial, investment and environmental policies which served the needs of sustainable development. Institution-building efforts were required to promote clear and consistent regulatory frameworks and stable public expenditure that dovetailed with international financing and private investment. There was still a worrying tendency to allow international concern for the environment to justify imposing extra conditions on development assistance or to replace such assistance with trade alone. In addition, there was a widespread perception in the region that environmental protection and sustainable development held back economic development. The institutions in charge of implementing environmental policy were weak from the point of view of formulation and implementation, so policies and regulatory instruments continued to be reactive rather than pro-active. Too little attention had been devoted to encouraging policies combining environmental improvements with competitiveness in output.

11. ECLAC was attempting to forge a link between the various public policy areas for the sake of stable, equitable and environmentally sustainable growth. There were five priorities for the Governments of the region. The first was to use comprehensive economic, social and environmental indicators to evaluate development sustainability, a particular necessity in the light of the Millennium development goals. The second was to integrate economic and environmental policies. ECLAC planned to analyse the link between trade and the environment at the international, regional and subregional levels, and explore ways of financing sustainable development through increased levels of investment in the environment. The third was to look for new opportunities for production, using the region's natural resources and environmental services as a basis, with a focus on energy efficiency closely based on the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The fourth was to promote sustainable ecosystem management and biological diversity by assisting countries to investigate innovative ways of funding efforts to restore and conserve ecosystems and value the global environmental services they provided. That emerging market was one in which developing countries, particularly megadiverse developing countries, should be helped to take part through transfers of technology. The fifth was to incorporate sustainable development into the management of urban environments through the reduction of urban poverty and the management of water resources.

12. Regional cooperation was vital to ensure implementation of Agenda 21 and whatever commitments were made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, on the basis of a more integrated view of economic, social and environmental considerations and the specific character of each area.

13. The current institutional structure for dealing with the environment in each region was in need of reform. The first step should be to strengthen the role of the regional commissions as entities which could support intergovernmental cooperation and integration at the regional and subregional levels. Throughout the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the regional commissions had maintained continuous dialogue and collaboration

with each other. ECLAC believed that the priorities for expanding such interregional cooperation should be trade and the environment, taxation policy and the environment, the financing of sustainable development, energy and biodiversity.

14. **Mr. Amoako** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)), Panellist, said that, at the time of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), about 200 million Africans had been living in extreme poverty, on less than $1 per day. Today, 100 million more had joined them, many of them the victims of H //AIDS. The people of Africa and the continent's environmental sustainability were in jeopardy. The growth rate in Africa in 2001 had been 4.1 per cent, the highest of any region; poverty reduction was now a more central element of many African development strategies; and there had been a renewal of social investment. Yet, if current trends continued, only 10 African countries would meet the poverty reduction, education and health targets set in the Millennium Declaration. Although there was a need for more debt reduction, increased aid and the removal of trade barriers, the most serious problem facing Africa was the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It would be vital to ensure that the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg in 2002, strengthened international solidarity in combating the disease.

15. If the current global climate trends continued and Africa became a full degree warmer over the next half century, there would be 10 per cent less rainfall in Southern Africa and the Horn and 15 per cent less in the parched Sahel, forests would shrink by 25 per cent, and the populations of low-lying coastal areas would have to move inland because of rising oceans. Climate change would require extremely costly adjustments which Africa, as the poorest continent, was least able to bear. The number of African countries experiencing water scarcity was expected to increase from 14 to 20 over the next 25 years; that called for greater attention to water management in regional and subregional water basins. Other major challenges were desertification and soil degradation. While he welcomed the decision by the International Fund for Agricultural Development to allocate a significant part of its portfolio to projects to limit the growths of deserts, the problem called for a more dramatic response. The reversal of soil degradation must be made a global priority, on a par with those that had emerged from the Rio Earth Summit.

16. In the light of those priorities, the emphasis in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) on sound governance and investment was most welcome. More efficient power grids, better transport systems and transboundary water sharing would all pay environmental and economic dividends. The United Nations played a vital role in building momentum for the common good. He therefore urged the Council to give its full support to efforts to promote human solidarity in the face of HIV/AIDS and to achieve economic development and environmental sustainability.

17. **Ms. Osseiran** (Secretary of the Commission, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), Panellist, said that the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development had strengthened the commitment to sustainable development in the ESCWA region, as well as highlighting the importance of linking its environmental, social and economic dimensions. It had become clear that efforts to achieve sustainable development would require not only regional consultation and coordination, but also interregional integration and communication on priority areas of mutual concern.

18. At the regional level, ESCWA member countries had worked hard to improve education, literacy and health and opportunities for women. Progress was also evident in the establishment of an intraregional electricity grid and of gas pipelines between some member countries. Regional efforts to harmonize environmental standards and customs procedures were under way. However, despite those achievements, significant challenges remained: lack of peace and security, poverty and unemployment, indebtedness, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, inadequate natural resource management, limited research in and adoption of appropriate technologies, weak participatory approaches and lack of capacity on the part of civil society to become actively involved in the sustainable development process. Solutions to those problems would have to take into account the social, political and economic specificities of the ESCWA member countries if they were to be effective.

19. The regional preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development had culminated in the adoption of the Executive Summary of the Arab Regional Assessment Report on sustainable development and the Arab Declaration on Sustainable Development, which had identified the need for an integrated pan-Arab strategy for achieving sustainable

development. The formulation of a shared platform of priorities was a first step towards Arab interregional integration of sustainable development efforts. However, if the ESCWA member countries were to reap the benefits of such an approach, they would also need to formulate an interregional action plan, establish an interregional institutional arrangement focused on sustainable development and adopt operational mechanisms for the implementation of agreed actions and approaches.

20. Interregional efforts must be based on proven similarities in regional sustainable development platforms. In that connection, there was a need to establish formal mechanisms to strengthen interregional cooperation not only among regional organizations sharing transboundary sustainable development concerns, but also among organizations seeking to support similar sustainable development objectives.

21. There were a number of constraints on the interregional integration of sustainable development issues, including inadequate financial and human resources, lack of regional peace and security, lack of mutual trust between the States concerned, different programme cycles for different regional agencies and inadequate institutional arrangements. Those constraints must be addressed, since collective efforts and synergies between regions increased the effectiveness of sustainable development strategies and facilitated the implementation of sustainable development action plans that reflected regional priorities and national aspirations.

22. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile) welcomed the contribution of ECLAC in fostering sustainable development and said that it could play an important role by tailoring the Millennium development goals to the situation in each of the countries of the region. ECLAC had made a constructive contribution to a number of regional initiatives and associations, including the Summit of the Americas Process and the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

23. **Mr. Balarezo** (Peru) said that, although the executive secretaries had covered a variety of issues, they had nevertheless highlighted certain common themes. The first was poverty, which was at the centre of the regional commissions' concerns. The second was sustainable development, though it was clear that each region, particularly Africa, had specific desires and needs in that regard. The third was the need to reinforce the regional and subregional focus as the most effective way of translating international plans into action at the national and local levels. In that connection, he asked what ECLAC was doing to ensure that Agenda 21 was implemented, particularly in the light of the connection between poverty and economic growth.

24. **Mr. Ntwaagae** (Observer for Botswana) said that he was gratified by the emphasis which the executive secretaries had placed on sustainable development, especially in the case of Africa. The efforts made by ECA to support African countries were commendable, particularly in the preparations for trade negotiations prior to the Doha ministerial conference of WTO. The Executive Secretary of ECA had rightly highlighted the challenges facing Africa, which were not unique to the continent, but were particularly serious there: illiteracy, poverty and its alleviation and, most of all, HIV/AIDS.

25. **Ms. Marroquín** (Guatemala) echoed the views of the representative of Chile regarding the important role played by ECLAC and singled out for praise the ECLAC subregional headquarters in Mexico City for its role in assisting the countries of Central America. She asked for comments on the economic situation in Latin America, which was in its third year of recession. She wondered whether that was simply a cyclical phenomenon, or whether it was the result of other factors.

26. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that interregional cooperation was crucial for the achievement of sustainable development. She therefore looked forward to the holding in Johannesburg later in the year of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which should seek to adopt recommendations that would be implemented, rather than remaining on paper. Turning to the work of the regional commissions, she asked whether they were cooperating with the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and what steps had been taken by ECLAC to promote cooperation among the ECLAC member countries in implementing the International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, 2002). Lastly, she expressed satisfaction at the excellent work of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

27. **Mr. Kogda** (Burkina Faso) welcomed the emphasis which the executive secretaries were placing on collaboration between the regional commissions, as that approach should help to identify specific problems

and lead to the sharing of best practices. The regional approach to development, in which the regional commissions played the central role, provided valuable guidance to individual Governments. ECA in particular was addressing Africa's very serious plight by appealing to all of the United Nations system to take concerted action. NEPAD was a significant step forward in that regard.

28. **Ms. Schmögnerová** (Executive Secretary of the, Economic Commission for Europe), Panellist, said that, although most of the questions and comments concerned the other regional commissions, she nevertheless had some general comments to make. ECE was involved in sustainable development efforts through the five environmental conventions covering its region. It was collaborating with the other regional commissions in connection with those conventions. For example, there was cooperation between ECE and ESCAP regarding the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and regarding energy and water resources in the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Ageing was also a central concern, and a forthcoming ministerial conference on the subject would endeavour to draw up a declaration of principles and a regional strategy that would be of particular significance for economies in transition. Concerns over economic growth focused primarily on the extent to which trends in the United States affected other countries and on the increasing income disparity between developed economies and economies in transition or within economies in transition.

29. **Mr. Kim** Hak-Su (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), Panellist, responding to the question from the representative of Peru regarding efforts to implement Agenda 21, said that the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development had identified areas requiring action by ESACP which included cleaner production technologies and sustainable energy systems, and the provision and management of fresh water. Those areas were reflected in ESCAP programmes. As the Asia-Pacific region was a major energy consumer, the emphasis on renewable and sustainable energy would continue. ESCAP was also involved in policy-making regarding water management through forums such as, the World Water Assessment Programme coordinated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and in handling water-related natural disasters.

30. Although Africa had the greatest number of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Asia had the largest proportion of people living in absolute poverty: 70 per cent of the world total. The Office of the Executive Secretary had a section dealing with LDCs, and a poverty centre had been launched together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to monitor implementation of the Millennium development goals. Future activities would include a study on poverty in the region and joint preparation of a ministerial-level meeting on LDCs, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states.

31. **Mr. Ocampo** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), Panellist, said that the ECLAC Subregional Office for the Caribbean played the highly important role of handling all issues concerning small island developing States. With regard to interregional cooperation, ECLAC was in the process of instituting a mechanism to promote the outcome of the Second World Assembly on Ageing held in Madrid, primarily through its Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre — Population Division (CELADE).

32. Some gains had been realized in Latin America and the Caribbean in implementing Agenda 21. In particular, the institutions dealing with environmental issues were much stronger than at the time of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. However, many of those institutions operated on the sidelines of the government administration. One of the chief aims of the World Summit on Sustainable Development should be to achieve full integration of the environmental dimension into the economic agenda, particularly where trade, industry, energy and water were concerned. New economic instruments were required at the national, regional and multilateral levels that would recognize the economic value of environmental resources. The step that had been taken in the Kyoto Protocol to create a market for global environmental services in relation to carbon emissions should be extended to many other areas. Many countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region were rich in biodiversity and in a position to contribute to mitigation of global warming. Appropriate mechanisms should be found to exploit the region's comparative advantages in those two areas.

33. The economic crisis of 2001 was continuing and worsening in 2002 and was potentially the most severe the region had experienced. The projected contraction in regional GDP for 2002 was due to a large extent to the situation of Argentina, but the figures excluding Argentina still reflected only minimal growth for the rest of the region, lower than the population growth rate for the second consecutive year. Although the roots of the problem were political as well as economic, the uncertainty in financial markets since the Asian crisis was a major factor, which had affected all emerging economies. The positive balance of net resource transfers during the period from 1990 to 1997 had been reversed, and the balance had remained negative for the past five years. The foreign direct investment component, one of the main sources of growth during the past decade, was also on the decline from its peak in 1999. The slowing of the United States economy had had a contractionary impact on the export industries of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, and the shock waves of the events of 11 September 2001 had badly depressed tourism in the Caribbean and had caused a sharp drop in prices of raw materials, the export mainstay of many Latin American countries.

34. **Mr. Amoako** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa), Panellist, said that, since Africa had the largest number of least developed countries of any of the regions and many landlocked countries and small island States as well, one of the first things the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States had done was to come to Addis Ababa to learn about ECA programmes and identify areas for increased collaboration and synergy with his Office. They had discussed cooperation on issues of poverty, trade, transport and information and communication technologies (ICT) for development.

35. In answer to questions about implementation of Agenda 21 he said that the mid-year economic report for Africa, which would shortly be published, would contain an in-depth analysis of the sustainable development challenges for the continent. ECA had created a sustainable development index for 38 African countries based on some 28 environmental and institutional indicators. Between 1974 and 2000, the number of countries showing a low sustainability index had increased from 16 to 19, and only three showed a high index for 2000. The irony was that most African countries had ratified most of the major environmental conventions, yet the situation had not improved. For real improvement, greater resources and institutional capacity were needed. ECA believed that learning how to replicate sustainable technologies could make a difference, but sustainable broad-based growth was also essential and improvements in health and poverty reduction were important. ECA reports emphasized the type of strategies that might work best. In the spirit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, ECA monitoring performance to see where countries were doing well and sharing best practices.

36. **Ms. Osseiran** (Secretary of the Commission, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), Panellist, said that ESCWA was involved in the implementation of Agenda 21 at four levels: policy, technical assistance, monitoring of implementation and awareness-raising. ESCWA had conducted a study on sustainable development planning in the region, which was a relatively unfamiliar activity. It provided technical assistance to member States in incorporating environmental planning in development planning. In monitoring, it emphasized the chapters of Agenda 21 on water and energy, since the ESCWA region was rich in energy sources but suffered from aridity. It was promoting solar and wind energy and was working to create a water management council among member States. Given the dearth of material in Arabic on sustainable development, ESCWA had produced documents, posters, pamphlets and fact sheets in Arabic to sensitize the public at large. As it happened, the ESCWA region had only one member State, Yemen, in the least developed country category.

37. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Observer for Grenada) said that sustainable development had been a catch phrase for many years, but some Caribbean States depended on the banana crop to sustain life and were facing severe challenges from the World Trade Organization, which was accusing the United Kingdom and others of subsidizing their banana production. He would like to hear the response of the regional commissions to the irony of that attack by an international organization on sustainable development in small island developing States.

38. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) said that she would like to hear more about cooperation with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, particularly from ECLAC, ESCAP and ECE. She was

also interested in any initiatives to promote ICT. In Suriname, a human-rights based approach to development was considered essential for sustainable development, and she would like to hear the views of the executive secretaries on that point. In the Latin American and Caribbean region in particular, school dropout figures for boys were high; she would like to know what attention was being paid to the problem. Since even the Monterrey Consensus did not double official development assistance, she wondered whether the regional commissions saw the achievement of the Millennium development goals as a realistic possibility, and, as a particular instance, whether more funding could be expected for follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

39. **Mr. Sharma** (Nepal) said that cooperation within the United Nations system was important in order to realize the Millennium development goals and bring to fruition the objectives set at recent regional and international conferences. His delegation was pleased that the regional commissions had been working more closely with the rest of the United Nations system, but he feared that they were somewhat isolated. The description of the regional commissions in a heading of the Secretary-General's report (E/2002/15) as "outposts of the United Nations" suggested remoteness, whereas they should be an integral part of the system, working closely with the other regional commissions, other United Nations bodies and the Economic and Social Council in particular. Within their regions, they needed to interface better with all stakeholders, whether governmental, civil society or non-governmental, and with the local representatives of the United Nations funds and programmes. It would be useful to engage more extensively with subregional organizations on issues of poverty, globalization and trade liberalization. The aim was not so much a cross-fertilization of ideas and concepts, since there was already a saturation of policies. Rather, it was strategies of implementation that were needed. To achieve the Millennium development goals and make a real difference in people's lives, major reforms would be required in the regional commissions.

40. **Mr. Rojas** (Chile) said that at the twenty-ninth session of ECLAC in Brasilia its member States had entrusted the Commission with the task of developing a joint strategy on globalization. In view of the economic prognosis for Latin America and the Caribbean, the matter had become even more urgent, and his delegation would like to hear more from the Executive Secretary about the possible outlines of a strategy for dealing with the crisis, many of whose causal factors were external.

41. **Mr. Sosa** (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that the regional commissions faced many common problems with respect to the environment, water and energy, and those problems might have common solutions. He would like the Executive Secretary of ECLAC to elaborate further on how environmental fiscal policy and environmental markets could contribute to sustainable development.

42. **Ms. Kotok** (United States of America) said that her delegation was pleased with the way the regional commissions had been focusing their work. While realizing that not all the regional commissions had the same mandate and that their work was demand-driven, she would like to know how much they collaborated with other regional organizations such as the Organization of American States or Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and how often the executive secretaries met to share best practices.

43. **Mr. Kim** Hak-Su (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific), Panellist, said that the regional commissions were in a process of revitalization and were following closely the second wave of the Secretary-General's reform. The heads of the regional commissions met between three and five times during the year, rotating coordination among them; he was the current coordinator. The meetings provided an opportunity to share experience, including best practices. Recently, topics for discussion had included ways of increasing interaction with the Council and strengthening the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs. Joint interregional projects had also been submitted to the Development Account under the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The regional commissions were working to ensure that the Millennium development goals were reflected in their work programmes and were sharing their medium-term plans and reform practices. ESCAP had an active Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and worked closely with member countries.

44. The use of the word "outpost" was not meant to imply distance from New York; rather, he saw himself as a "field commander" responsible for implementing the Council's resolutions and decisions at the regional level. Coordination with other United Nations bodies and subregional agencies was part of the ESCAP agenda and included quarterly meetings with 22

agencies, among them the Bretton Woods institutions and the Asian Development Bank. In September 2002, the executive heads of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Economic Cooperation Organization would meet to discuss the development of joint programmes. UNDP resident coordinators visited ESCAP; recently, he had begun to attend their meetings as well. Both ESCAP and UNDP were involved at the national level in Viet Nam and Cambodia, and ESCAP and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific had launched an initiative for the joint monitoring and implementation of the Millennium development goals in their work programmes.

45. As part of its reform process, ESCAP had created an ICT subprogramme to provide strategy- and policy-related advice to member countries, particularly those which were marginalized. However, the reform also included a proposed change in the balance between the Commission's normative and operational activities, a greater emphasis on poverty reduction, globalization and other emerging social issues, demand-driven assistance on accession to the WTO and training programmes on the environment and commercial diplomacy.

46. **Mr. Ocampo** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), Panellist, said that, since both internal and external factors had contributed to the vulnerability of Latin American countries, the problem must be addressed at both those levels and new impetus must be given to existing regional and subregional integration processes that would give member countries needed autonomy and efficiency. The report on globalization and development submitted at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission provided further information on that matter, while the three current international processes, the WTO negotiations, the Monterrey Consensus and the upcoming Johannesburg Summit, provided excellent opportunities for progress. Recently, ECLAC had included fiscal and environmental policy in its activities by carrying out a comparative study of how public resources for sustainable development were generated and allocated; in the future, a system of environment-related taxation would be created for that purpose.

47. ECLAC cooperated extensively with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States through the Tripartite Committee on Trade Liberalization and with all the other regional initiatives of Latin America and the Caribbean, including the Puebla-Panama Plan, the Summit of the Americas process and the Ibero-American Summits. It had coordinated a report on Latin American children that had been submitted to the General Assembly at its special session on children and was involved in a regional cooperation programme with the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and UNDP in pursuit of the Millennium development goals and, in particular, poverty eradication through existing national mechanisms and shared experiences. ECLAC was also cooperating closely with the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Network of the ICT Task Force and was helping the Dominican Republic to prepare for a regional meeting leading up to the World Summit on the Information Society.

48. **Ms. Singh** (India) noted that the Executive Director of ESCAP had mentioned that UNDP and ESCAP had established a joint initiative for implementation of the Millennium development goals and monitoring of progress in that area. It was not clear what kind of monitoring was envisaged, what kind of indicators would be used and what kind of arrangements would be made with Member States. Clearly, some sort of cooperation would be required. She asked what mandate ESCAP had to undertake such an activity.

49. Furthermore, the Executive Director's announcement that ESCAP would be involved in type 2 partnerships was premature. The regional commissions should await the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development before planning follow-up activities.

50. **Mr. Kim** Hak-Su (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific), Panellist, replied that the Indian Government had raised the question of whether ESCAP had a mandate to monitor implementation of the Millennium development goals in its consultation meetings with the Commission. The word "monitoring" was used in the Millennium Declaration; there was no intent to infringe on the sovereignty of Member States. The question of whether the word "review" should be used in place of "monitoring", as the Government had requested, had been discussed with UNDP in the meetings of the poverty centre advisory group. He hoped that the word "monitoring" would be interpreted flexibly.

51. On the basis of the discussions held at the Fourth Summit Preparatory Committee meeting in Bali, it was his understanding that the proposed type 2 partnerships

were similar to the extrabudgetary funding arrangements which ESCAP had already agreed with the Governments of Japan, the Netherlands, Korea and the United States of America.

52. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia), Panellist, said that Western Asia lagged behind other regions where ICT was concerned. ESCWA had established an ICT division as part of its restructuring process, and a consultative committee had been established to revise policies and provide guidance on new technologies. The new committee had held a forum attended by various key figures from the region, including a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, who had advised Governments on the priorities to be set. An advisory board would meet every two years and a task force would gather information on how technology could be used to reduce poverty and provide jobs for young people under age 25, who accounted for over half of the region's population. The Egyptian Government had introduced automatic teller machine (ATM) cards with the holders' fingerprints so that pensions could be withdrawn by recipients too poor to make the minimum deposit required for the opening of a bank account.

53. The executive secretaries of the regional commissions communicated on a daily basis by telephone and electronic mail and shared experiences on restructuring and implementation. ESCWA assisted the resident coordinators by providing conference facilities, interpretation and printing services and facilitating contact with Governments, and UNDP studies generally used consultants employed or recommended by ESCAP. Sectoral and other meetings were held with the Arab League, most recently on the issue of technology in June 2002, and she and the Secretary-General of the Arab League had made similar public statements on the need for decision makers to address development challenges through the use of technology.

54. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (UNHCHR) had an office in the same building as ESCWA, which was training its staff in ways of incorporating human rights into its activities and of working with Governments on that sensitive issue. A project for the assessment of human rights in the region and plans for follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing were also under way.

55. **Ms. Singh** (India) said that her Government's interpretation of the Millennium development goals and the proposed type 2 partnerships differed from that of the Executive Director of ESCAP. It would pursue the matter further in the appropriate forum in order to give the regional commissions a clear mandate for both the Johannesburg Summit and the General Assembly.

56. **Mr. Amoako** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa), Panellist, said that ECA had been promoting ICT for many years and had launched the African Information Society Initiative in 1996. In cooperation with various development partners, it was preparing national ICT infrastructure plans for 20 African countries, and it served as the secretariat for the ICT Task Force for Africa. Together with Cisco Academy, the World Bank and the Information for Development Programme, it had established a three-month ICT training programme for 60 African women. The Canadian Government had recently allocated $25 million over a three-year period to the development of a centre for connectivity and e-policy as part of the Information Technology Centre for Africa initiative.

57. The "right to development" approach was crucial in reducing poverty, achieving the Millennium development goals and combating HIV/AIDS. Like ESCWA, ECA was working closely with the UNHCHR in the context of the NEPAD, good governance and other fundamental issues.

58. An estimated $12 billion in additional funding for development cooperation had been voted at the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference; it was hoped that Africa would receive at least half of that amount. At best, however, that would merely constitute a return to the official development assistance levels of the late 1990s and would not suffice to meet the poverty reduction targets and the Millennium development goals.

59. Lastly, ECA spent 25 per cent of its resources on regional cooperation and provided direct or indirect support for the work of many regional organizations, particularly the African Union.

60. **Mr. Stanislaus** (Grenada), speaking on a point of order, said that sustainable development was at the heart of the banana issue in Caribbean countries, yet he had received no answer to his previous question. He wondered whether it was by design or otherwise that none of the participants, and particularly the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, had touched on an issue of such importance to the region.

61. **Ms. Schmögnerová** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe), Panellist, said that, while the importance of ICT for development had been slightly overestimated, electronic applications in the areas of trade, enterprise development and governance were definitely beneficial. ECE was involved in a new initiative that would assist 27 countries with transitional economies in the formulation of ICT policies. It had sponsored forums for women that included the promotion of electronic business through ICT. Together with the other regional commissions, it was preparing for the World Summit on the Information Society.

62. ECE cooperated not only with the European Union, but also with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and other regional bodies. In particular, it was responsible for the economic dimension of security in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In the area of the environment, ECE cooperated with OECD in carrying out extended producer responsibility reviews, concentrating on countries with transitional economies whereas OECD dealt primarily with its member countries. The two organizations also cooperated in holding the Conference of European Statisticians. There was a division of labour between ECE and the European Conference of Ministers of Transportation, in which ECE focused on transport norms and standards and the European Conference focused on transport policy. Lastly, cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development could be improved.

63. **Mr. Ocampo** (Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), Panellist, replying to the representative of Grenada, said he agreed that highly specific economies must be given significant alternatives and time to adjust to changes in the international rules regarding the products on which their economies depended. In particular, banana-growing Caribbean economies needed time either to introduce technological changes that would allow them to produce bananas that could compete on the international market or to develop alternative activities. Unfortunately, there was a significant difference of opinion on the banana issue among ECLAC member countries. However, all members agreed that the time element was crucial, and ECLAC had taken a strong position on that point.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.32

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

16 October 2002

Original: English

Substantive session for 2002
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 32nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 19 July 2002, at 4 p.m.

President: Mr. Rosenthal ..... (Guatemala)

Contents

Regional cooperation (*continued*)

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02-48898 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Regional cooperation (*continued*) (E/2002/15 and Add.1-3 and Add.3/Corr.1 and E/2002/16-20)

1. **Mr. Kim** Hak-su (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Current Coordinator of the Regional Commissions), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2002/15 and Add.1-3 and Add.3/Corr.1), said that it provided information on the activities of the regional commissions, both as outposts of the United Nations and as parts of their respective regional institutional landscape, and outlined for the Council's consideration the substantive contribution of the regional commissions to the United Nations development agenda and objectives. Addendum 3 contained resolutions and decisions adopted by the commissions that required the action or attention of the Council. In addition, the summaries of the economic surveys of the five regions (E/2002/16-20) contained valuable information and policy analysis of important regional trends and issues.

2. It being generally recognized that the commissions brought a valuable regional dimension to global development activities, their executive secretaries believed that the Council should explore ways of further integrating the various regional perspectives into debates on global development issues. The regional commissions remained committed to an effective follow-up to the major conferences. In response to the Monterrey Consensus, for instance, there should be policy dialogue at the regional level on macroeconomic financial, trade and development issues. One of the main challenges of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development would be to translate into integrated action the different public policy criteria of economic, environmental and social sustainability. At the same time, it was important to adopt a differentiated approach in implementing global agreements, and that was best done at the regional level. The follow-up to the World Summit would offer a unique opportunity for each region to develop its own agenda, thus refining and consolidating the global agenda.

3. The regional commissions had taken stock of the reforms they themselves had instituted in order to further the Millennium Declaration goals. At recent joint meetings, it had been agreed: that their programmes of work should be better aligned with those goals and with the priority needs of the countries; that the primary beneficiaries of the commissions' activities had to be clearly defined in order to improve outreach to civil society and the private sector as well as to Governments; and that a coherent response to emerging priorities required greater coordination between the commissions and with the entire United Nations system.

4. In identifying new areas of work, the regional commissions needed to be guided by three criteria: the countries of each region had to see the areas as priorities; they should be areas where the commissions had comparative advantages and strong expertise; and they should be areas that brought the commissions' research and analysis to bear on their technical cooperation activities within an overall regional vision that concretely supported the development efforts of the countries. The resolutions and decisions before the Council reflected the results of the ongoing dialogue between commissions and countries regarding the high-priority needs of the regions and the achievement of the Millennium development goals.

5. The meetings of the executive secretaries of the commissions had proved to be a very effective coordinating mechanism, in terms of exchange of information, better understanding of specific issues and areas of common concern, and actual collaboration.

6. **Mr. Lauridsen** (Observer for Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, and the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, said that the countries of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region had, in preparation for the World Summit, reaffirmed in September 2001 their commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development with its strong emphasis on sustainable development. The European Union and its member countries, moving more swiftly than the other ECE countries, had jointly ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change the previous month.

7. The European Union was determined to help the World Summit on Sustainable Development achieve action-oriented outcomes and to follow up on them effectively. The Summit should result in stronger

commitments by all countries to all three of the dimensions of sustainable development, the social, the economic and the environmental. The regional commissions, working together, were determined to play a major role in the global efforts.

8. Implementation of the Millennium development goals required greater effort and good governance by individual countries and by the international community as a whole. The Monterrey Consensus had marked a major step forward, and the welcome increase in official development assistance (ODA) announced by donor countries now needed to be made available, because international cooperation would continue to be critical for the foreseeable future.

9. The European Union had set out its long-term global objectives in its Strategy for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2001. It supported sustainable development initiatives in seven Nordic countries and also cooperated with other groups of countries on all three aspects of development. Successful regional cooperation could lead to strategic partnerships between regions, which in turn could significantly enhance the international system of cooperation. For instance, negotiations on regional economic partnership agreements between the European Union and its 77 partner countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific would begin in September, and it was supporting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Furthermore, the European Union's own "everything but arms" initiative was an effort to promote the sustainable development of an open world economy in which trade, environment and development would be mutually supportive. Globalization offered the positive prospect of stimulating economic growth and improving living standards worldwide, but market forces had to be harnessed to preserve the environment and strengthen social cohesion while spurring growth.

10. In the social field, the European Union supported regional implementation of the recently adopted Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing, which would be the subject of a forthcoming ECE ministerial conference in September 2002.

11. **Mr. Niculescu** (Romania), referring to some of the recent developments in connection with ECE, said that, at its 2002 session, ECE had addressed the economic aspects of security in Europe, one of the two major cross-cutting issues of strategic relevance to the Millennium Declaration. In the interests of an integrated approach and the establishment of common priorities, the importance had been stressed of collaboration with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the parties to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and relevant United Nations bodies. A joint NATO/European Union colloquium that had been held in 2001 on the economic dimension of conflict prevention, with the participation of private-sector representatives, had set up a public/private partnership for peace designed to mobilize private contributions to ECE and OSCE development projects in post-conflict situations and in conflict-prone areas of the region. Also OSCE and ECE were studying possible joint action to enhance access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters.

12. In the fall, Romania would host an ECE/International Telecommunication Union (ITU) preparatory ministerial meeting for the World Summit on the Information Society that would be held in 2003; and ECE and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were jointly working to create the European Regional Network for Information and Communication Technologies for Development as a tool to assist the countries in transition. An ECE coordination meeting to be held later in the year would review new developments in Eastern and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, with particular attention to the economic and social aspects of security and to the regional follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

13. **Mr. Pankin** (Russian Federation) said that the regional commissions were of growing importance in promoting conditions for economic growth and stability on a regional level and in helping individual economies to integrate and adapt to the globalization process. Their most important task was to transform the multilateral dialogue on problems at the global level into specific strategies for regional development, and to that end, their role in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system at the regional level must be strengthened.

14. His delegation welcomed the decisions taken at the fifty-eighth session of ESCAP on reform and restructuring, as well as the discussions on updating working methods at ECE. As a member of two regional commissions, ESCAP and ECE, the Russian Federation

attached great importance to their assistance to countries with economies in transition in completing the process of economic reform and integration into the regional and global economy. In its cooperation with the two commissions, it attached priority to national capacity-building in the areas of compliance with international environmental conventions, the development of transportation corridors and networks, integrated energy systems and stimulation of markets and investment. In the ESCAP region, Russia's major interest was the increased economic cooperation of the far east of the Russian Federation, including the development of transportation links with other countries of the region and the participation of Russian business in programmes for the exploitation of natural resources and capacity-building with emphasis on information and communication technologies.

15. A number of recommendations on cooperation among the regional commissions, as contained in the report of the Secretary-General, should be highlighted, including sharing of information on best practices and successful activities, indicators to measure sustainable development and compliance with environmental standards, and an interregional dialogue on research into questions of environment and sustainable development.

16. The regional economic commissions should pursue active cooperation with all partners in the United Nations family, and his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General that cooperation with the private sector should be strengthened in order to increase its involvement in social and economic development and sense of social responsibility. It would be useful to receive information on the effectiveness of the measures taken in the regional commissions to increase the involvement of the business sector.

17. **Ms. Serwer** (United States of America) said that the regional commissions played a vital role in fostering economic and social development. They served as useful forums for discussion of a wide range of issues, provided technical expertise, monitored progress, collected data, conducted studies, exchanged ideas and experiences, and established technical standards to benefit their member countries. Regional commissions, capitalizing on their expertise within their respective mandates, must focus on issues that served their members' interests. They should be encouraged to work closely with other regional organizations in a complementary rather than competitive way.

18. ESCAP had adopted a new streamlined structure that would enable it to respond directly to members' priorities and needs, as it focused on poverty alleviation and key emerging social issues, and to channel its resources towards areas in which it had a comparative advantage.

19. ECLAC was to be commended for its critical work in helping member States seize upon the benefits of globalization. Its formal oversight structure, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Priorities, had given them a mechanism by which to adapt the ECLAC work programme to important emerging regional issues.

20. She welcomed the efforts of ECE to improve its work, in particular the initiative to establish a consultative process with member States. Her delegation looked forward to working with ECE members and its secretariat to build a decision-making mechanism to ensure the best possible resource allocation. She also welcomed the ground-breaking work on African regional economic organizations done by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its exemplary work to support NEPAD and to include civil society in discussions of Africa's economy.

21. Her delegation supported the revised medium-term plan for the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the recognition that the Commission's ultimate goal was to assist member countries in creating an enabling environment which would stimulate sustainable development and its three components: economic development, social development and protection of the environment. She trusted that ESCWA members would make use of the Arab Human Development Report 2002, prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in their efforts to achieve sustainable development. Her delegation would continue to work with all regional commissions to strengthen their work programmes and share information and expertise.

22. **Mr. Lee** Ho-Jin (Republic of Korea) underscored the importance of the regional commissions as outposts of the United Nations and the regional expression of the Organization. They had provided important input on, inter alia, globalization, follow-up to world conferences and regional peace-building initiatives. The Council's work, including the substantive session on interregional cooperation for sustainable

development and regional challenges, would complement that work. His delegation fully supported the draft resolution on restructuring the conference structure of ESCAP. As a member of ESCAP, it remained committed to assisting the Commission in its important dual role of representing both the United Nations and the Asia-Pacific region.

23. His delegation welcomed discussion of pressing issues such as poverty, employment and technology in the context of sustainable social development and supported the focus on the Doha development agenda and the importance of regional trade. It looked forward to participating in plans for regional technical cooperation and capacity-building within ESCAP as well as further collaboration with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He welcomed the establishment of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force and hoped that it would be instrumental in closing the digital divide in the region. It was important to expand cooperation between ESCAP and the Bretton Woods institutions, the Asian Development Bank and regional organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Telecommunity. The recent Fourth Asian Mayors Forum and Regional Workshop on Good Urban Governance for Poverty Reduction and Social Development was a good example of regional cooperation. In closing, he commended ESCAP for its joint initiatives with other regional commissions.

24. **Mr. Holubov** (Ukraine) said that the regional commissions had two main functions: to respond to the specific needs of their regions and to be the regional outposts of the United Nations. They should allocate their limited resources wisely in line with those two functions. They also had a role to play in improving the coordination of regional activities within the United Nations system, which was particularly important for the promotion of interregional cooperation through joint programmes and activities, tackling of shared problems and dissemination of accumulated expertise. Coordination between the Council, the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the executive organs of United Nations agencies likewise needed to be further improved.

25. Ukraine was especially interested in strengthening the activities of ECE. In accordance with its 1997 plan of action, ECE had focused on sustainable programmes and progress had been made in further integrating cross-sectoral concerns into its activities. In order to respond effectively to the changing landscape in Europe and the demands of member States, ECE must continue its reforms in order to maximize the impact of its activities. The Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of other global conferences should serve as guidelines for the work of ECE.

26. He reiterated his delegation's support for the proposal submitted by the Eastern European States at the fifty-seventh session of the ECE, aimed at expanding the Commission's technical assistance, improving its efficiency and ensuring adequate funding. Technical cooperation should be demand-driven and focus on tangible results which had a real impact on the development of the recipient countries; it should be organized on a sectoral basis. The Commission should reinforce its fund-raising activities and improve its strategies to that end.

27. He recognized the need for enhanced coordination between the Council and the regional commissions, including exchanges of information and joint meetings. The Council had a key role to play in ensuring that regional structures contributed to international cooperation and delivered quality products to their constituencies in an efficient manner by overseeing their activities and helping them strengthen their capacity.

28. **Mr. Popov** (Observer for Belarus) said that his Government attached great importance to enhanced cooperation within the framework of the regional commissions. It welcomed their active participation in regional and interregional projects and their efforts to involve the specialized agencies in the implementation at the regional level of the decisions taken in international forums.

29. His Government valued highly the activities of ECE in a number of areas. ECE had demonstrated the effectiveness of a regional approach to solving problems involving water and other natural resources, environmental protection, renewable energy sources and transport, to name a few. New areas of activity had emerged in recent years, and ECE had demonstrated its ability to adapt to changing needs in the region. However, the increase in the work of the regional commissions had not been accompanied by an adequate increase in resources. In the view of his delegation, the question of reform of the work of the regional

commissions should be discussed in the context of the overall reform of the Council.

30. **Mr. Wang** Qi (China) said that regional economic cooperation and globalization were the two major trends in the world economy. His Government had always attached great importance to economic cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region and had made sustained efforts to foster even closer cooperation in the belief that non-discriminatory economic cooperation would expand trade cooperation in the region and facilitate liberalization of multilateral trade investment. It intended to increase its efforts in that regard and establish even closer economic and trade ties with other countries and regions on a mutually beneficial basis.

31. As the only organization of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP had made an important contribution to the development of the region and, in the face of increasing globalization, should put its unique advantages to best use by coordinating regional economic cooperation and promoting synergies between regional and multilateral cooperation. Discussions at the ESCAP annual meeting on the theme of sustainable social development in a period of rapid globalization had provided an opportunity to discuss joint efforts to meet the challenge of globalization and strengthen exchanges and cooperation. The reform programme finalized at that meeting focused future work on reducing poverty, managing globalization and addressing emerging social issues. His delegation would reinforce cooperation with regional partners in order to contribute to increased prosperity for all countries of the region.

32. He recalled his Government's readiness to provide financial and human resources for the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (APCAEM) in the area of Beijing and said it stood ready to further enhance cooperation with regional partners in agricultural engineering and machinery. It had also agreed to host the sixtieth annual session of ESCAP in 2004 in Shanghai, which had been the birthplace of the Commission and was in the forefront of China's reform and opening-up process.

33. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) must continue to play an essential leadership role in helping meet the challenges and priorities of increased regional integration within an open regional structure. It should expand and strengthen coordination with regional and subregional organizations and should continue its efforts to promote the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and enhance the physical integration of the region.

34. The regional commissions played an important role in ensuring the success of international conferences, and ECLAC had made an important contribution to the Monterrey Conference and the preparatory work for the World Summit on Social Development. Her Government was committed to sustainable development and the outcomes of the Rio Conference and had hosted two important regional meetings recently: an ECLAC/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) meeting the previous October on preparations for the World Summit on Social Development in the light of the Rio outcomes and a forum of environment ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean in May. The latter had developed a Latin American and Caribbean proposal for sustainable development which dealt with common actions in areas such as biodiversity, energy, and water resources, and covered the issues of vulnerability and sustainable development for cities. It also included institutional aspects such as training, development of indicators and the importance of participation by civil society in sustainable development efforts.

35. She trusted that that proposal would be taken into account in the World Summit outcomes. It provided for a platform of cooperation which, although expressed within a regional context, remained open to participation from civil society and international partners. Its success would depend not only on the countries directly involved but also on support from the international community.

36. **Mr. Valera** (Mexico) noted the positive role played by ECLAC in preparing the International Conference on Financing for Development. The Monterrey Consensus defined a new international architecture for development based on implementation of commitments through the concerted efforts of the United Nations and follow-up mechanisms. ECLAC would play an important role in implementing the Monterrey outcomes and would add its efforts to those of Member States and other regional commissions in identifying points of convergence and complementarity at the upcoming World Summit on Social Development.

37. **The President** drew attention to the recommendations contained in document E/2002/15/Add.3.

Draft resolution on restructuring the conference structure of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

38. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Draft resolution on place and date of the next session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

39. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

40. **The President** suggested that the Council should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields and its addenda on global meetings, cooperation with other regional bodies, and matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention (E/2002/15 and Add.1-3 and Add.3/Corr.1), the summary of the economic survey of Europe, 2001 (E/2002/16), the summary of the economic and social situation in Africa, 2001 (E/2002/17), the summary of the economic and social survey of Asia and the Pacific, 2002 (E/2002/18), the summary of the economic and social survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2001 (E/2002/19) and the summary of the survey of economic and social developments in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, 2001-2002 (E/2002/20).

41. *It was so decided.*

42. **Ms. Tallawy** (Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia) said that the Council had just taken note of the ESCWA decision on its medium-term plan. The Commission had reorganized its programme of work, cutting the number of activities in order to concentrate on the priorities of its members, which lay in four crucial areas: water, technology, globalization and WTO agreements, and social policy. In its restructuring, the Commission had created a new division on technology and another on globalization. The report of ESCWA was not yet complete, as a special session would be held to adopt the new programme of work before submission of the report to the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.33

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

24 October 2002

Original: English

Substantive session of 2002
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 33rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday 22 July 2002, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Rosenthal (Vice-President) ..... (Guatemala)

Contents

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B

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02-48925 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/277 and 52/12 B (E/2002/67 and 73)

1. **Mr. Khan** (Director of the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination), introducing the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the work of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 2002 (E/2002/73), said that, for the first time in seven years the Secretary-General had not submitted a progress report under the agenda item considered annually by the Council on implementation of the two seminal resolutions on reform, restructuring and revitalization of the economic and social fields, because most aspects of the issue had been dealt with in the present Council session either during the coordination segment under the theme of strengthening the Council or during the general segment under the topic of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. One important element not so far covered, however, was the work of the functional commissions. In the report, the Secretary-General had reviewed their work and their multi-year programmes of work, identified cross-sectoral themes and made recommendations for the Council's consideration. The Council might wish to give particular attention to the sub-items under recommendation 3 in paragraph 39 in order to give guidance to the functional commissions. Whether called management or guidance, he believed that such direction was an important part of the Council's work, so that the consistency and complementarity of the work of the functional commissions could be increased and the usefulness of their recommendations to the Council and the General Assembly for integrated follow-up to conferences enhanced.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations E/2002/SR.34

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

12 November 2002

Original: English

Substantive session for 2002
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 34th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 22 July 2002, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Rosenthal (Vice-President) ..... (Guatemala)

Contents

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Non-governmental organizations

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02-48930 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/57/73, A/57/130-E/2002/79, E/2002/61)

1. **Mr. Huntley** (Chairman, Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples) said that it was important for the agencies and institutions of the United Nations system to increase their assistance to the Non-Self-Governing Territories so as to help the Special Committee to complete the unfinished business of decolonization during the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. East Timor having joined the ranks of sovereign States, there remained 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories under the Special Committee's purview, most of them small island developing countries situated in the Caribbean and the Pacific, with particular needs and vulnerabilities.

2. In the course of its work, the Special Committee received information from the administering Powers under Article 73 (e) of the Charter of the United Nations and heard representatives of the Territories, petitioners, other officials and non-governmental organizations regarding developments there. During its 2002 session, the Special Committee had adopted one decision and nine resolutions by consensus, and a unanimous resolution on Puerto Rico. The views of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories were central to the work of the Special Committee, whose sole motivation was to ensure that they could exercise their right to self-determination. Equally essential was the cooperation of the administering Powers, and the Committee very much hoped that its working relationship with all of them, including those which attended Committee meetings only informally, would continue to improve so that real progress could be made, within the framework of the case-by-case work programmes initiated in 2000.

3. A particularly successful work programme was the one for Tokelau, a dependent Territory administered by New Zealand, which had been carefully drawn up to reflect the wishes of the people with respect to their future status and living conditions. It had provided for a visiting mission to be dispatched to Tokelau in August to examine the political, social and economic development of the Territory. In recent years, the Special Committee had sought creative ways of engaging all the administering Powers in a practical dialogue on the future of their territories, with the full participation of their peoples.

4. During its 2002 session, most participants from the Territories had highlighted the need for adequate international assistance, as mandated by a long series of General Assembly resolutions. A subsequent series of resolutions over the decades had called for the participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in the programmes and activities of the United Nations system. In response, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), for instance, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) had made the Non-Self-Governing Territories in their regions associate members of the commissions; and some other United Nations bodies had granted them observer status or membership; but a more concerted effort was needed to establish arrangements for participation. The Council itself might wish to give effect to a 1998 ECLAC resolution calling for the association of its associate members with the Council, especially since a number of non-governmental organizations already participated in the Council's work.

5. The Special Committee was heartened by the support the Council had expressed for its work and by its recognition that the people of the Territories had to be made more aware of the United Nations role in their decolonization and of special United Nations assistance programmes for which they might be eligible.

6. The assistance being provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was of paramount importance in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in terms of programming, access to regional disaster management programmes, tourism development, financial and economic technical assistance, micro-enterprise development and capacity-building. UNDP also continued to support specific country projects in individual Territories and functioned as a highly effective coordinator of assistance from the wider United Nations system.

7. He introduced draft resolution E/2002/L.15, which had been prepared by the Special Committee for adoption by the Council on the item under

consideration. It emphasized the legitimate right to self-determination of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories and, as a corollary, the need to extend all appropriate assistance to them. It asked the specialized agencies to review the conditions in each Territory and to make specific proposals for accelerating economic and social progress, and to give priority to providing assistance in a collaborative and integrated way. He hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted unanimously.

8. **Mr. Renninger** (Department of Political Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/57/130-E/2002/79), said that it had been compiled by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories on the basis of input from United Nations specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. It described the challenges faced in providing short-, medium- and long-term assistance to the Palestinian people. During the reporting period, the realities and priorities in the occupied Palestinian territory had shifted significantly owing to the rapid escalation of violence and confrontation, particularly in March and April 2002, when there had been extensive destruction of the Palestinian social and economic infrastructure and a sharp deterioration in the living conditions. Underpinning the growing humanitarian need was a fundamental economic crisis that was eroding the capacity of the population to cope with the situation. Domestic production levels had declined 20 per cent, and there were unprecedented levels of unemployment, a 30-per-cent decline in per capita income, and poverty that had spread to some 50 per cent of the population. As at the end of 2001, the infrastructural damage had amounted to over $300 million, while income losses had totalled over $2 billion.

9. The international community was responding to the social and humanitarian aspects of the crisis with a two-track approach: support for the Palestinian Authority's capacity to deliver essential services, and emergency assistance for infrastructural damage and for urgent social and humanitarian needs. Donors, the United Nations and the aid community at large had worked closely among themselves and with the Palestinian Authority. It had been decided to give priority, first, to immediate humanitarian assistance and repairs and, secondly, to rehabilitation of infrastructure and institutions. A regional damage assessment conducted by the newly created donor support group, comprising Palestinian Authority officials, and representatives of the European Commission, UNDP, the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank, had concluded that the Israeli military incursions during March and April had resulted in over $340 million in damage. A separate United Nations assessment had been launched in May to assess the humanitarian damage and propose an action plan.

10. Donor funding had increased dramatically between the outbreak of the current crisis and the first quarter of 2002, although the bulk of the assistance had been in the form of budgetary support. Disbursements for capital and capacity-building projects had dropped by approximately 60 per cent.

11. The Israeli closures and movement restrictions were the single most important direct cause of the socio-economic and humanitarian crisis, and they were also a significant hindrance for all United Nations bodies, notably the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and for the activities of the donor community at large. While recognizing Israel's legitimate security concerns, the United Nations and the donor community had repeatedly insisted on the need to ease the movement restrictions. To help the Palestinian people out of economic collapse, it would be crucial to lift the restrictions on civilians, regenerate productive activities and facilitate the assistance work. Emergency economic and social assistance, however, could not be a substitute for the resumption of political dialogue. There was a remarkable consensus in the international community that peace in the region could best be promoted by parallel efforts on the political, security and socio-economic fronts, a point also recognized at the recent meeting in New York of the Middle East "quartet".

12. **Mr. Langmore** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that the Director-General of ILO had prepared a report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories based on a mission she had sent to assess the employment conditions in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan. According to the report, political security — for both Israel and the Palestinian population in the occupied territories — could not be maintained if it was not grounded in economic and social security. Yet, conditions as

described in the Director-General's report were terrible: income had plummeted by 46 per cent, unemployment had risen to 43 per cent and the incidence of poverty had multiplied, possibly to as high as 62 per cent. The war had also damaged the Israeli economy: the gross domestic product (GDP) had declined by 0.6 per cent after having risen by 6.4 per cent the previous year, and the unemployment rate was forecast to rise to 10.2 per cent.

13. Steps that ILO could take would be to reassess technical cooperation programmes in the light of the current humanitarian crisis and consider new initiatives, to be funded by donor Governments, in the fields of employment promotion, youth, social protection, social dialogue and institutional support. ILO could support the establishment of a Palestinian fund for employment and social protection, as proposed by the Arab Labour Conference, and prepare the necessary feasibility study. ILO could, in addition, explore with Palestinian and Israeli constituents the opportunities for social dialogue, to help create an atmosphere of mutual respect and ease tensions. It was planning to strengthen the capacity of the ILO Jerusalem Office.

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/57/63-E/2002/21)

14. **Ms. Tallawy** (Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/57/63-E/2002/21), said that since the last session of the Economic and Social Council the upsurge in violence had continued and the confrontations had increased in severity. The situation was characterized by Israel's use of heavy conventional weapons, extrajudicial killings and collective punishment of the civilian population. Many innocent civilians had been killed in the bombing of villages or in exchanges of gunfire, in circumstances indicating an indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force. Recent intensive military incursions and the reoccupation of Palestinian areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority had resulted in many civilian deaths.

15. The note by the Secretary-General indicated that the Israeli authorities had continued in the widespread practice of destroying property. Between September 2000 and 31 January 2002, in the Gaza Strip alone, 660 homes housing 845 families had been partially or completely destroyed. Most such demolitions took place at night without any advance warning being given to residents. In addition, the Israeli army had devastated a significant amount of agricultural land; in particular, the creation of buffer zones for the construction of bypass roads and the building of settlements had resulted in the "sweeping" of large areas of agricultural land by bulldozers, involving the uprooting of many fruit and olive trees and the destruction of wells and agricultural constructions.

16. Checkpoints, closures and curfews imposed by Israel had severely impeded access to medical care, education and employment. Each day, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who wished to travel between Palestinian towns and villages had to pass through one or more Israeli checkpoints where they were routinely subjected to abuse. A number of Palestinian civilians, including women in labour, had died as a result of being prevented from reaching hospitals or seeking medical treatment. The severe restrictions imposed by Israel on freedom of movement also had devastating effects on the Palestinian economy as a result of which the percentage of Palestinians living in poverty had more than doubled. Such acts of violence had a negative impact on the psyche of the Palestinian population, and in view of the high percentage of the population under the age of 18, the impact could be expected to have a significant effect on the next generation for years to come. Many Palestinians reported experiencing an overwhelming fear of the future and feelings of hopelessness. Many of the Palestinians arrested by Israel between September 2000 and September 2001 were children, some 160 of whom remained in Israeli jails. Almost all Palestinian child detainees were subjected to physical and psychological torture while under interrogation. While in prison, children were also denied the right to education and to visits from families and lawyers, in contravention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

17. The great majority of member States regarded Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as a violation of the fourth Geneva Convention which

prohibited the transfer by an occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the occupied territory. The settlements had been condemned as illegal by numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. There were some 190 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip linked to each other and to Israel by a vast system of bypass roads and buffer zones which separated the Palestinian communities and deprived Palestinians of agricultural land. The effect was seriously to hamper the possibility of a Palestinian State as the roads destroyed the territorial integrity of the occupied Palestinian territory. Israel was continuing its policy of building additional settlements.

18. In the Golan Heights in the Syrian Arab Republic, some 17,000 Israeli settlers resided in 33 settlements. Employment opportunities for the Arab population of the Syrian Golan Heights continued to be extremely restricted and those who were fortunate enough to find work were poorly paid and had no access to social benefits, health insurance or unemployment compensation.

19. It was clear that the delays in the implementation of the agreement reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization continued to aggravate the living conditions of the Palestinian people and to sustain the current cycle of violence. As the Secretary-General had said, a reduction in the violence was the most immediate priority. The question of security had to be addressed alongside key political issues, particularly the question of land, and the economic and social issues, including the increasingly desperate conditions of the Palestinians. Failure to address those issues would inevitably give rise to further and perhaps deadlier exchanges of violence.

20. Apart from the misery and suffering in the occupied territory and Israel, the conflict had a negative impact on the entire region. First and foremost, the region's socio-economic development was gravely influenced by the Palestinian-Israeli struggle, which was diverting enormous human and financial resources away from development, away from economic and political reforms and away from addressing the basic needs of the people of the region. The continuing delays in resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were undermining the forces of progress and moderation. The suffering and destruction being endured by the Palestinians and Israelis on a daily basis was inflaming hatred and ethnic prejudices and increasing radicalism and fanaticism throughout the region and beyond. The image and prestige of the United Nations, as well as the principles embodied in the Charter, were being gravely undermined by the continuation of the conflict.

21. **Mr. Ahmad** (Observer for Iraq) said that the Palestinian tragedy was deepening because of the daily aggressions perpetrated by the Zionist entity against unarmed civilians and its destruction and demolition of homes causing the displacement of the population. In the course of the campaign waged against the Palestinian people, what could only be described as crimes against humanity were being committed, and in full view of the international community, especially the Security Council, which seemed incapable of deterring the aggressors and restoring the rights of the victims. A double standard was being applied: when serious violations were committed against the Palestinian people, some Security Council members remained silent; yet those same States were quick to condemn when the unarmed Palestinian people resisted. The Security Council was being tested. If it failed to uphold the principles of the Charter and of international law, the very prestige of the United Nations would be called into question.

22. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) said that the document submitted to the Council clearly illustrated the difficult living conditions of the Arab population in the lands under illegal Israeli occupation in Palestine and in other territories, including Jerusalem and the occupied Syrian Golan.

23. When Arab-Israeli negotiations had begun, the clear position of his country had been that the negotiations should lead to the attainment by the Arabs and the Palestinians of all their rights as set forth, in particular, in the resolutions of the Security Council and in accordance with the principle of land for peace. After the Declaration of Principles had been signed in 1993 between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, his country had emphasized the need to reach agreement on the withdrawal of Israel from all of the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and from the occupied Syrian Golan, thus turning a new page in the history of the Middle East and enabling the people of the region to develop and prosper. Unfortunately, those hopes had been disappointed by Israel's daily acts of aggression against Arabs in the Palestinian territory, including occupied Jerusalem, and in other Arab territories including the occupied Syrian Golan, in

defiance of the wishes of the international community and despite the relevant Security Council resolutions which called on the occupying Power to maintain peace in all occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, to ensure the movement of goods, to remove all restrictions on entering and leaving Jerusalem and to desist from the arbitrary measures taken by the forces of occupation against the Palestinian people and against the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. Instead of heeding those appeals, Israel had merely consolidated the status quo. It had continued its policy of settlement and exploitation of the resources of the occupied Arab territories, the destruction of the infrastructure, cutting down thousands of trees and closing down roads used by the Palestinians.

24. The geographical distribution of the settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories was such as to surround local Palestinian communities, preventing their natural growth, and the roads built by the occupying Power throughout the West Bank had been designed to reinforce the occupation. Israel's policies were in blatant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibited the occupying Power from transferring its own civilian population to the territories it occupied. The expansion of the settlements had involved the destruction of Palestinian homes at night without prior warning. According to the estimates of UNRWA, between September 2000 and January 2002 the occupying forces had destroyed some 660 homes housing 845 families. Large areas of agricultural land had also been devastated, reducing the population to abject poverty, and adversely affecting education and health.

25. The health services provided by UNRWA had been seriously affected and the severe restrictions imposed on movement from the West Bank had resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children immunized against disease in 2000. There had also been an increase in the number of stillbirths and low birth weight infants, a reduction in the enrolment of women in labour in antenatal care programmes, and an increase in the incidence of anaemia.

26. While the occupying forces were strengthening their presence in the occupied Syrian Golan, the Arab population was facing a further deterioration of its standard of living as a result of restricted opportunities for employment and education and the unfair taxation policy. Opportunities for employment were limited, in particular, by the fact that travel between the Golan and the Syrian Arab Republic was difficult and dangerous owing to the policy of the occupying Power, which obliged the population to remain where it was.

27. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that, since the report of the Secretary-General on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory covered only the period from April 2001 to March 2002, she would give a brief overview of conditions since that time. In late March, the situation had deteriorated dramatically, with the Israeli invasion and reoccupation of major Palestinian population centres, including refugee camps, and the escalation of military assaults against the Palestinian people. Using heavy weaponry and excessive force, the occupying forces had killed Palestinians, including women and children, carried out extrajudicial executions, searched, raided and destroyed homes, detained Palestinians in mass roundups, obstructed access by ambulances and medical personnel to the wounded, destroyed electricity and water networks, bulldozed roads and destroyed agricultural fields and trees.

28. Moreover, the Israeli occupying forces continued to impose a military siege, severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods and collective punishment on the entire Palestinian population. As a result, its socio-economic despair was deepening and the humanitarian crisis worsening with each passing day. The restrictions and curfews had deprived Palestinians of work, trade, education, access to proper medical care and any semblance of normalcy in daily life. Access to food and other basic necessities had been obstructed as well, and the shortages were continuing. Moreover, the restrictions had prevented humanitarian assistance from reaching those in need.

29. Those serious violations of international humanitarian law had caused extensive harm to the Palestinian civilian population, infrastructure and institutions. At least 1,680 Palestinians had been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, and hundreds wounded. She called on the international community and the United Nations system to strengthen the humanitarian assistance to and protection of Palestinian civilians living under foreign occupation, in an effort to alleviate the grave humanitarian situation and help in the reconstruction of Palestinian institutions. In that connection, her delegation emphasized the importance of the work of the United Nations agencies on the ground and expressed gratitude for all their

contributions to the welfare of the Palestinian people. It reaffirmed the need for the Palestinians to live a normal life, free from foreign occupation, destruction and fear, in their own State.

30. Until that time, the international community must demand that Israel, the occupying Power, should respect the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law and comply fully with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

31. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) said that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, as described in the report of the Secretary-General and the report submitted by ESCWA, was a source of concern and horror to the international community. The reality of the situation and who was responsible for it was well known. The Israeli military action had dashed all hopes for peace, and as long as the occupation continued the suffering of the Palestinian people would continue. Safeguarding civilians was a duty of the international community, and the image and prestige of the United Nations were being affected by the handling of the conflict.

32. **Mr. Saleh** (Bahrain) said that the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people had deteriorated significantly over the past year as a result of the policies of the Israeli Government. These policies were based on State terrorism entailing the excessive use of military force against the civilian Palestinian population and the imposition of blockades in order to create buffer zones, imposing an economic, social and psychological stranglehold on the Palestinians. The Israeli forces had established 54 buffer zones and had recently made a start on building a separation wall reminiscent of the Berlin wall and the policy of apartheid formerly pursued by the Government of South Africa. The closures had seriously affected the Palestinian economy and increased the suffering of the Palestinian people.

33. The Israeli policies also restricted the freedom of movement of humanitarian organizations that provided assistance to the Palestinian people. One hundred and ninety Israeli settlements had been established in the West Bank occupied by 380,000 settlers, who were being armed by Israel so as to make them into another army carrying out acts of violent terrorism against Palestinian civilians. Israel had killed some 1,000 Palestinians including many children and young people. Israeli activities had included 58 extrajudicial executions in violation of the basic principles of international conventions and the principles of humanitarian law, in particular the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. A policy of destroying homes and property and displacing their inhabitants had continued and had increased in recent months. It had included the destruction of the infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority as well as the headquarters of the President of the Authority. The mass violations of international humanitarian law had targeted civilians and prevented doctors from attending to the wounded and removing the dead. Many doctors had also been killed and many women in labour had not been evacuated because of the Israeli blockade, which was another flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention.

34. The economic and social plight of the Palestinian people was clear and could be seen daily on television programmes throughout the world. Even television stations that were traditionally pro-Israeli were beginning to show something of what the Palestinian people was experiencing as a result of Israeli terrorism and the occupation of Arab lands

35. As the Secretary-General had said to the Security Council, the social and economic desperation of the Palestinian people was an impediment to the establishment of lasting peace and security. The standard of living of the Palestinians had fallen over the course of the preceding 18 months, with the result that over two thirds of the population of the Gaza Strip was now living below the poverty line and the same was true of about half the population of the West Bank. His delegation agreed with the statement of the Secretary-General in his report to the effect that a permanent resolution to the conflict could not be achieved unless Israel halted its occupation of Palestinian territory and withdrew its settlements. The ending of the Israeli occupation of all Arab lands, including Palestinian territory, the occupied Syrian Golan and the remaining occupied territory in Lebanon, was the only means of putting an end to the present suffering and of achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

36. **Mr. Mekel** (Observer for Israel) said that the issue of the living conditions of the Palestinians was of great concern to his Government. Beyond basic concern for their welfare as fellow human beings was the recognition that the Palestinians were and always would be neighbours, and the State of Israel therefore

had a vested interest in seeing their social and cultural life flourish and their economy prosper.

37. It had long been recognized that the path to the full economic and social potential of the Palestinian people was obstructed by the persistent conflict with Israel, and that potential could only be reached within the context of a lasting, peacefully negotiated agreement with Israel. It was that understanding which had led both parties to the Oslo peace process and the Camp David Summit in July 2000. There, Israel had extended its most far-reaching peace offer to date, one that would have provided for Palestinian independence, self-governance and economic and social development. That offer, however, had received a negative response from the Palestinian leadership, which instead launched a full-scale campaign of terrorism against the citizens of Israel in the hopes of winning even more concessions.

38. Up to September 2002, the Palestinians' economic and social conditions had been steadily improving and would have improved still more if an agreement had been reached. With the onset of terrorism, however, that trend had been reversed. No matter how the Palestinians sought to portray it, it was obvious that their current predicament was a result of the decision to forgo a political process in favour of a campaign of terrorism against innocent civilians. That choice, and the unrelenting waves of suicide bombers resulting from it, had forced Israel to take steps in order to protect the lives of its people, in exercise of its inherent right to self-defence under the Charter of the United Nations.

39. Israel had no desire to see the Palestinian people suffer. On the contrary, it supported international efforts aimed at alleviating the dire humanitarian situation which that people was facing. But neither the Palestinians nor the international community could be permitted to lose sight of the fact that Palestinian suffering was strictly a result of the Palestinian leadership's decision to pursue violence rather than dialogue.

40. The most direct and lasting way to improve the conditions of the Palestinian people would be through a complete cessation of acts of terror and a return to political dialogue with Israel. The continuation of the terrorism campaign would only divert energies away from productive endeavours that could enhance their well-being. Anyone who truly cared about helping the Palestinians would urge them to change course and abandon the path of violence and confrontation in favour of compromise, acceptance and accommodation with Israel. Should the Palestinians do so, they would find in Israel an eager and willing partner for peace.

41. **Mr. Kanaan** (Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said that Israel's imposition of severe restrictions on freedom of movement in the occupied Palestinian territory was jeopardizing the prospects for resumption of the peace process. The closure policy had a far-reaching impact on the Palestinian economy: the World Bank estimate that the per capita gross national product in 2002 would be 30 per cent lower than in 1994, at the beginning of the Oslo peace process, was particularly alarming. The reports of environmental damage were equally alarming, as were the closures that had brought to a halt numerous infrastructure projects supported by the international community. The rapid increase in Israeli settlement activities, which contravened the fourth Geneva Convention, was also disturbing. The economic situation of the Arab population in the Syrian Golan was poor: Arab workers had no access to social benefits or health insurance, very little job security and no unemployment compensation. That situation was unacceptable, and OIC shared the concern of the Secretary-General, bearing in mind that the continued Israeli occupation was the core of the problem.

42. The recent twenty-ninth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers had strongly condemned Israel's refusal to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and the imposition of its laws and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as its policy of annexation, settlements, land confiscation, diversion of water sources and imposition of Israeli citizenship on Syrian citizens. It had called on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan and to pull back to the lines of June 1967. The Conference had further called on the United Nations Security Council to revive the commission which had examined the situation relating to Israeli settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, in accordance with Security Council resolution 446 (1979). In an effort to find a just resolution to the conflict, the Conference had stressed the need for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

43. OIC continued to hope for a just and lasting resolution of the escalating conflict. It advocated a

return to the peace process and to the spirit and framework of the various agreements signed by the two sides. The Palestinian Authority had, despite all impediments, faithfully endeavoured to fulfil its part of the agreements. OIC looked to the Security Council to compel Israel to respond positively to those efforts and to the relevant resolutions. The goal of the peace process could be achieved through peace initiatives and negotiation, rather than by military action, which only encouraged retaliation and resistance. A peaceful solution required a genuine understanding of the interests of the Palestinian people in order to restore their right to sovereignty. There was an urgent need for a change of attitude on the part of Israel. OIC advocated a return to the peace process, in a spirit of justice and with careful attention to Palestinian problems, in compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions. It was fully committed to its continuing role in assisting efforts towards a just and enduring peace in the Middle East.

44. **Mr. Shamina** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the data on the decline in the Palestinian economy provided in the report submitted by ESCWA (A/57/63-E/2002/21) were of serious concern to his delegation. It also objected to the use of the term Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/130-E/2002/79); in reality, it was an occupying force and should be identified as such. The international community had recognized the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and therefore the situation should be treated as an occupation, to which Charter obligations would then apply.

45. Regrettably, the international community had been unable to implement the relevant resolutions allowing humanitarian assistance to reach the Palestinians. Israeli military operations had led to increased suffering, and unemployment was having a devastating and far-reaching impact on the Palestinians. Israel was attempting to change the demographics of those areas, and the international community should exert pressure on Israel to stop building settlements on Palestinian land, in violation of the Geneva conventions. In closing, his delegation emphasized the need to implement previous Council resolutions on the situation.

46. **Mr. Sabbagh** (Observer for the Syrian Arab Republic) said that the report that was being considered (A/57/63-E/2002/21) contained many examples of the daily sufferings of the Palestinian people and of the Syrian population in the occupied Syrian Golan, and cited many examples of barbaric acts perpetrated by the occupying forces, such as assassinations using a variety of weapons, including helicopter gunships and tanks, and involving the arbitrary use of force. The report also recorded the widespread destruction of homes which took place at night and without prior warning, and of the devastation of agricultural land, as well as attacks on property carried out by Israeli settlers who were stated in the report to have been armed by Israel. Information was also provided in the report on the large number of Palestinian children who had been incarcerated in Israeli prisons, been subjected to psychological and physical torture and deprived of education and family visits. With regard to the settlements, the decisions taken by the Israeli Government were designed to expedite the expansion of settlement activity in defiance of the resolutions of the international community, which regarded the settlements as illegal and viewed the transfer of the population to those settlements as a war crime.

47. In spite of the condemnation by the international community of the Israeli occupation and of its barbarous practices, the Israeli Government had stepped up such practices, killing innocent Palestinian civilians, occupying their towns and villages, blowing up their homes and destroying the infrastructure, including installations built by the United Nations. The observer for Israel had stated that those activities were for security reasons. Yet, history taught that the only means of achieving security was to put an end to occupation. The occupying force continued to attack churches and mosques and to use heavy weaponry against unarmed civilians. One example was the recent massacre in the Jenin refugee camp.

48. In the occupied Syrian Golan the sufferings of the Arab population were continuing as a result of violations by the occupying Power of the most elementary principles of justice and human rights, including various means of repression, pressure and terrorism. Members of the population were being arrested and tortured in Israeli prisons, their land, crops and livestock were being confiscated, settlements were still being built and natural resources stolen in defiance of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international humanitarian law as enshrined in various instruments.

49. For more than 50 years Israel had practised hatred and racism in their most virulent form, and it continued to do so under the regime of Ariel Sharon, who, far from being a statesman, had always been and continued to be a proponent of the policy of terrorism, occupation and settlement building and an opponent of the just and comprehensive peace sought by all Arabs.

50. His delegation called on the international community, particularly those States that were appealing for the observance of human rights, not to stand idly by but instead to require the Israeli leadership to desist from its aggressive policies, put an end to the occupation and comply with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, the terms of the Madrid Agreement and the principle of land for peace, without which a comprehensive peace would never be achieved in the Middle East.

51. **Mr. Ayari** (Observer for Tunisia) said that the situation in the Palestinian territories had continued to deteriorate, and the Palestinians were being denied access to basic goods, food, health care and schooling for their children. Israel, drunk on power, continued to invade Palestinian territory, causing the deaths of hundreds of civilians through the blind and disproportionate use of force, as would no doubt be documented in the report of the Secretary-General on the attack on the Jenin refugee camp.

52. The Israeli colonization policy was at the root of the problem. In a clear violation of international law, the Palestinians were being deprived of their agricultural land, and a system reminiscent of apartheid was being instituted. He called on Israel to implement the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

53. **Mr. Alaei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that international human rights organizations and the media had documented the war crimes committed by Israel during its most recent incursion into Palestinian territory. The United Nations, including the Security Council, had been shown to be powerless to remedy the situation. He reiterated that the continuing occupation of Arab land in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria was at the heart of the crisis and was in violation of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and international law.

54. The Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were subject to siege, curfew and criminal repression and were unable to move freely owing to the large number of checkpoints set up to protect Jewish settlements. Such measures were a collective punishment meant to humiliate an entire people and increase its level of frustration and suffering. The United Nations must adopt whatever measures were necessary to force Israel to end the occupation and bring about a lasting peace. To that end, an international force to protect the civilian population was essential. Furthermore, those who had ordered or committed war crimes in the occupied territories must be brought to justice.

55. **Mr. Mustafa** (Sudan) said that the Israeli occupation had severely affected the well-being of the Palestinian people and the social infrastructure of the occupied territories. The continued use of force against civilian populations was in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. He recalled that at the twenty-ninth session of OIC the Ministers for Foreign Affairs had condemned Israel and its settlement policies and expressed support for a Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem. He therefore called on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to end its occupation and guarantee the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

56. **Mr. Hyassat** (Observer for Jordan) said that the suffering of the Palestinian people was the direct result of Israeli occupation and repression, in violation of international law. He stressed that Israel's security concerns could only be addressed in the context of an overall settlement which was both just and comprehensive. The international community must prevail on Israel to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions by withdrawing its occupation forces and helping to establish a just and lasting peace for all the peoples of the region.

Non-governmental organizations

Recommendations contained in document E/2002/71 (Part I)

57. **The President** invited the Council to take up agenda item 12 and to turn to the five draft decisions recommended by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and contained in its report (E/2002/71 (Part I)).

Draft decision I: Applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification received from non-governmental organizations

58. **Mr. Kim** Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation supported the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, recognized the important contribution made by NGOs to the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and welcomed the establishment of the general voluntary trust fund in support of the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Network. He nevertheless regretted that the Korea Freedom League was being recommended for consultative status. That organization did not meet the conditions for consultative status, and he stressed that the Council must ensure that all NGOs granted consultative status respected fully the Charter of the United Nations and in particular refrained from politically motivated actions.

59. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the draft decision.

60. *Draft decision I was adopted.*

Draft decision II: Quadrennial reports, special reports and complaints

61. *Draft decision II was adopted.*

Draft decision III: Resumed 2002 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

62. **The President** said he had been informed that during informal consultations it had been agreed to amend the text of draft decision III. The words "on the understanding that the conference services will be provided on an 'as available' basis", should be inserted following the words "from 8 to 24 January 2003,". The amendment would have no programme budget implications. He took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft decision, as amended.

63. *Draft decision III, as amended, was adopted.*

Draft decision IV: Establishment of the general voluntary trust fund in support of the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Network

64. *Draft decision IV was adopted.*

Draft decision V: Report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its 2002 regular session

65. **The President** said he had been informed that agreement had been reached to defer action on draft decision V to a resumed session of the Council as soon as Part II of the report became available in all official languages.

66. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan), supported by **Mr. Amorós Nuñez** (Cuba) and **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan), expressed concern that deferral of action on draft decision V would create a precedent. Both parts of the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should be available and voted on at the same time. She understood that the delay was due to technical reasons and would therefore not oppose deferral, but she trusted that the situation would not recur.

67. **Mr. Moret** (France) agreed that deferral set a bad precedent. His delegation supported the equality of all official languages and regretted that the documents were not available in all six languages. It would, however, be unfair to penalize the non-governmental organizations which had been recommended for accreditation because of translation delays within the Secretariat.

68. He believed, however, that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations should reflect on its methods of work. The delay was to a large extent attributable to the excessive length of the report. He noted, for example, that some 30 to 40 per cent of the Committee's report was taken virtually verbatim from Committee meetings. Delegations which were members of the Committee should ask themselves whether so much detail was necessary.

69. **Mr. Zhang** Lei (China) said that his delegation, as a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, was satisfied with its work and hoped that it would continue to promote NGO participation in the United Nations system. He also regretted the delay, however, and stressed the need for all relevant documentation to be circulated in time to facilitate discussion.

70. **Mr. Williams** (United States of America) agreed with the representative of France that the report was excessively long and that that issue should be addressed. Thanks to the spirit of flexibility they had shown in agreeing to act on the first four draft

decisions, delegations had paved the way for the many non-governmental organizations which were being recommended for consultative status to begin working with the Council.

71. **Mr. Roshdy** (Egypt) said that his delegation, which was not a member of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, was in the awkward position of being asked to adopt draft decisions with inadequate information. He joined with the representative of the Sudan in expressing concern at the need to defer part of the report, a situation which should not be repeated. As to the suggestion that the report was excessively long, he emphasized that it must include all relevant information so as to enable delegations to take informed decisions.

72. **The President** said he took it that the Council wished to defer action on draft decision V.

73. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.